

H. Streatfeild
M E R O P E:

1487. e 33
A

TRAGEDY.

As it is Acted at the

T H E A T R E - R O Y A L

In D R U R Y - L A N E.

By His MAJESTY'S Servants.

By AARON HILL, Esq;

The SECOND EDITION, Corrected.

With an Additional NEW SCENE.



L O N D O N:

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in the Strand. MDCCL.

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E P I L O G U E.

Spoken by Mr. PRITCHARD.

I *M* glad with all my Heart, I've scap'd my Wedding—
Glad! cry the Maids?—Heaven keep such Joy from
spreading!

Marriage, (poor Things!) don't move their Heart so coldly.
'Tis a dark Leap, they own—but, Love jumps boldly.—
Fair fall th' Advent'ers! I'm no Husband-bater.—
Only, be warn'd by Me, and wed no TRAITOR.
Pain-hunting Murm'rer! born, to growl, and grumble!
No King can please him,—and no Wife can humble!
Sick to the Soul, be HEAVEN his kind Physician!
Earth's ablest Drugs are lost, upon Ambition.
All Warwick-lane falls short:—and, to my Knowledge,
No Cure is hop'd for, in our Female College.

Shun plotting Heads, dear Ladies!—All miscarries.
When One, who hums and haws at Midnight, MARRIES.
Better, plain, downright DUNCE—No Dream, pursuing:
One, that means bluntly—and knows, what he's doing!
Not Him, whose faëlicious Mind, outsoaring Pleasure,
Is still most busy,—when his Wife's at Leisure.

Better, a Sportsman, sound of Wind, and hearty.—
Better, Sir Sot,—than Spouse dry drunk, with Party!
A hunting Husband hallows—and you HEAR him.—
A drunken Deary stag-gers—and you STEER him.—
Each—conscious of his Wife, takes Care, to make her,
One Way or other—an indulg'd Partaker.

But, your sage, saturnine, ambitious Lover,
Keeps no one Secret; Woman wou'd discover.
Stranger at home, he strolls abroad, for Blessing:
And holds whate'er he HAS not worth possessing.
Freedom, and Mirth, and Health, and Joy,—despises!
And scorns All REST—he, so pro-found-ly WISE is!

At length, thank Heaven! he DIES: kind Vapours strike
him:

And leaves behind,—ten thousand Madmen, like him.

PERSONS

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

POLIPHONTES, *General of* } Mr. HAVARD.
Mycene.

MEROPE, *Widow of the* } Mrs. PRITCHARD.
late King.

EUMENES, *her Son.* Mr. GARRICK.

EURICLES, *a Lord, of Me-* } Mr. USHER.
rope's Party.

NARBAS, *Foster Father to* } Mr. BERRY.
Eumenes.

ERIX, *Favourite of Poli-* } Mr. BRIDGES.
phontes.

ISMENE, *Daughter of Narbas.* Mrs. GREEN.

Chief Priest, and other Priests. Mr. BEARD, &c.

Ladies, Officers, Guards, &c.

SOME PAGES ARE FAINT AND
PATCHY IN THE ORIGINAL



M E R O P E.



A C T I. S C E N E I.

An Apartment in the Palace.

M E R O P E, *mournful, on a Couch.*

I S M E N E, *leaning melancholy, below ;
and Attendants.*

I S M E N E.

SEE! where the lone majestic Mourner weeps :
Loft, even to *Musick's* Power! — try : strain
each Note,
In Melody's wide Compass. — Happily,
Some Change, through *sad*, to *lively*, may have Force,
To strike recov'ring Sense, and wake Regard.
— First, in low Sympathy of *Sorrow's Softness*,
Sooth her dejected Soul — then, start at once
To *Swells* of Joy — and storm Attention's Ear.

[*Musick with Trumpets.*]

After the Musick Merope rises, and comes forward.

M E R O P E.

Let me, when, *next*, thy too officious Love,
Faithful *Ismene*, trys th' harmonious Charm,

B

Let

Let me, have Musick, *solemn*, all, and *slow*,
Sad-suited to my Thoughts—Mix not for me,
Who have no Power to *taste*, such *spritely* Notes,
As they who are more Happy, find more Sweet?

I S M E N E.

Why, when the *Gods* grow gentle, are *You* sad?
You felt their *Anger*, sharply.—Now they smile,
Embrace their proffer'd Bounty—All the Lords
Of glad *Mycene*, in full Senate met,
Take Measures to proclaim you *reigning* Queen:
You, whom Distress but brightens!—to whose Charms,
Made awful by your Grief, Woes add new Majesty!

M E R O P E.

What, no News yet, of *Narbas*? or my *Son*?

I S M E N E.

May it be soon!—No Prince, of Birth like His,
Where-e're conceal'd, can 'scape such Search, unknown.

M E R O P E.

Will ye, at length, ye Powers, reward my Tears?
Will ye, at last, restore *Eumenes*, to me?
—If he yet lives—this only remnant Heir
Of his wrong'd Mother's Miseries!—oh, *save* him.
From his dear Breast, strike wide the Murd'rer's
Dagger.

Is he not *Your's*? a Branch, from Great *Alcides*?
What, tho'—(forget it, and be *busb'd*, O Faith!)
What, tho' to Traitors prosp'rous Swords, you gave
His *Father's* fated Life—ah, yet! desert not
This Image of his Form, that fills my Soul.

I S M E N E.

Dear, tho' he doubtless was, and justly mourn'd,
Shou'd you *exclude* all Sense of Bliss, beside?

M E R O P E.

I am a *Mother*:—with a Mother's *Fears*.

I S M E N E.

But, can a Mother's Fears efface the Stamp
Of *Hero's* Soul, that marks a Race like yours?
—Sweet, tho' his infant Smiles, they dwell, too fix'd,
Too

A T R A G E D Y.

3

Too deep, on your touch'd Memory!—Long Years
Are past, since first you lost him.

M E R O P E.

Lost him?—never.—

In twice seven dreadful Years, no Moment's Light
Broke on my Eyes, but brought *His Image* with it.
Why tell'st thou me of *Time*?—Days, Months, and
Years,

Have grown; but with 'em grew, my Pain, to lose him.
—Weigh that last fatal Hint, thy Father sent me.

Hope, soon, said he, to see the Prince Eumenes
All, you wou'd wish:—*fear All, from Poliphontes.*

I S M E N E.

Wisely, you fear him.—but 'twere wiser, still,
So fearing, to *prevent* him.—Hear the *States*:
Quit, at their Prayer, this *Regent's* Name—be *crown'd*:
And rise, *indeed* the *Queen* they meant to make you.

M E R O P E.

Is not the Crown my *Son's*?

I S M E N E.

A Son, so lov'd—

Shou'd he return, wou'd thank—

M E R O P E.

Perish the Heart,

That, meanly proud, and poorly fill'd for *Self*,
Swells, from Another's *Losses*!

I S M E N E.

Public Interest—

M E R O P E.

Curse on *all* Int'rest, that includes not *Honesty*!
—But, here, ev'n Int'rest brings no Plea to tempt me.
What can a *childless* Mother hope, from Empire?
What has Distress to do, with Pomp's vain Luster?
—I see the very Light of Heav'n, with *Pain*.
Never shall Splendor chear these blasted Eyes,
That saw my bleeding Lord, my murder'd Children;
Saw my Friends fall: Saw *Men* and *Gods* forsake me.

B 2

—O,

—O, Guilt! O, Perfidy!—oh! Death's dire Day!
Present, for ever, to my frightened Soul.

I S M E N E.

Oft have I wept,—to hear that Day's sad Tale.

M E R O P E.

I hear it *now*!—Even yet their Cries rise round me!
Save, save, the *King*—save the poor gasping *Princes*:
Save the distracted *Queen*!—I scream—I fly—
On every Side I turn meet battling Crowds:
Swords, glitt'ring Spears, loud Shouts, and mingled
Groanings.

Meet, *last*—a Sight—beyond all Sense of Horror!
Meet—an expiring Husband's out-stretch'd Eye,
Strain'd, with a death-mix'd Tendernefs on mine——
And struggling from his Blood, to reach and clasp me.

I S M E N E.

Patience, O Madam, and forget these Horrors.

M E R O P E.

—There two expiring infant Suff'rers *fell*,
The Eldest, of our Loves!—duteous, in *Death*!
Cross the King's Breast, they threw their little Bodies,
And lent *their* Hand's weak Aid—to save their Father.
—*Only Eumenes*—'scap'd th' *Assassin's* Fury.
Some interposing *God* vouchsaf'd to *veil* him:
And He, who screen'd him, then, may, *once*, restore him.
—*Narbas*, thy wife, thy faithful Father, bore him
Far from my Sight—to some dark safe Retreat:
Some *Desart*,—barren of Distress, and Man!

SCENE II.

MEROPE. ISMENE. EURICLES.

I S M E N E.

Madam!——Lord *Euricles*——

M E R O P E.

Welcome—what Hope?

E U R I C L E S.

Vain was our Search—From *Penens'* Bank, it spread,
O'er

A T R A G E D Y.

5

O'er vast *Olympus*: far and wide, through *Greece*,
Enquiry, lab'ring, lost its fruitless Prayer.
Description cou'd not wake the least Idea.
None knew, none ever heard of, *Narbas*' Name!

M E R O P E.

Alas ! he breaths no more—my Son is *dead*.

I S M E N E.

So, Fear makes real every fancied Woe.
—You've heard, that, on Report of this new Peace,
My Father guides him, secret, to your Hopes.

E U R I C L E S.

Just was his Caution! *Narbas*, wisely loyal,
Veils his Return, and cautiously conveys him.
Narbas knows All his Dangers——I, mean while,
Watch, with a guardful Eye these Murd'ers Motions :
And, with determin'd Hand, prepare to save him.

M E R O P E.

On Faith so try'd as Thine, even Woe leans, easy.

E U R I C L E S.

Doubt but my *Power*'s Defect : My *Will* finds none.
—But I have News more threat'ning.
Th' assembled Senate vote, in warm Debate,
A Confort in your Crown.—

M E R O P E.

Presumptuous Care !

You shou'd have call'd it *Insult*.

E U R I C L E S.

Words were vain.

Truth, unsustain'd by Power, but fights, to *fall*.
The partial *People* roar for *Poliphontes* :
And Right, and Law, and Pity, sink before him.

M E R O P E.

Can Fortune, then, reduce the Great to *Pity* !
Can Kings, in their own Realms, contract to *Slaves* ?

E U R I C L E S.

Something must be resolv'd, to check their Speed.

M E R O P E.

Yes——I will *face* these Lords, of Kings, and Law :

Comets of Empire! these portent'ous Stars,
That sparkle by the Fire they *steal* from Majesty!
I will go dart Truth's Light'ning in their Eyes,
And thunder in their Ears the Rights of Thrones.
I will revive lost Sense of Trust and Duty:
I will assert their Sov'reign's near Return.

(going.)

E U R I C L E S.

Oh, Heav'n! be wary——That way, Ruin lies.
Their Tyrant Leader starts, already fir'd,
By that Alarm: and dreams, of what he dreads.

M E R O P E.

What *can* he, more——so much already done?

E U R I C L E S.

Jealous of Danger, Men make Haste in Guilt:
Work, to be safe, and hold no Means too wicked.
Mycene, but by Faction, freed from Faction,
Claim'd like a Conquest, he computes His *own*.
No Tye so sacred binds endanger'd Valour,
Where hot Ambition spurs it——Every Rampart
Gives Way, before him. *Law*, corrupted, guards him.
Wealth dresses, *Poverty* attends, *Pride* leads:
And *Priesthood* presses Gods who *hate*——to *serve* him.

M E R O P E.

I see th' Abyfs, before me——Let it be.
If I plunge in, and crush this *Poliphontes*,
'Tis but, to fall for Vengeance.

E U R I C L E S.

Soft!——he comes.

Exeunt Euricles and Ismene.

M E R O P E.

Wear for a Moment, Heart! the Veil thou hat'st.

S C E N E III.

M E R O P E. P O L I P H O N T E S.

P O L I P H O N T E S.

Ever in *Tears*, my Queen!——lend a long Truce

A T R A G E D Y.

5

To Sighs ; and cast aside your needless Sorrow.
Shake, from those injur'd Eyes, each Cloud that dims 'em :
And to the Voice of *Love*, vouchsafe your Ear.

——You frown——

M E R O P E.

I do, indeed : and gaze, with Horror !

P O L I P H O N T E S.

Gaze on.—I am no stranger to *myself* :

Nor to a Woman's *Passions*.—I grew grey
Beneath a Weight, of Winters spent in Arms.

——I know, Time's Furrows are no Paths to Love.

I know it, All—But, Wisdom knows it *not*.

—Weigh not my Offer in Disdain's light Balance.

You are the Daughter, Mother, Wife, of *Kings* :

But the State wants a *Master*.—What avails

Vain Title, till some Sword, like mine, supports it.

M E R O P E.

Bold *Subject*, of a King who call'd *me* Wife !

Dar'st thou defame the Mem'ry of thy *Lord*,

With such audacious Hope ?—Aspire to *me* !

Me, to supplant my *Child* ! my Heart's whole Care :

Stain his dishonour'd Throne, with Guilt and Thee !

Me, can'st thou dream so base, to wed Thy Lowness :

And crown with Empire's Wreath a Soldier's Brow ?

P O L I P H O N T E S.

Soldier ? immortal Gods !—*Who* more deserves

To govern, States, than He who, best, can *save* ?

He who was, first, call'd *King*, e're That, was *Soldier*.

Great, because brave ; and scepter'd by his *Sword*.

I am *above Descent* ; and prize no *Blood*.

Scarce is my own left mine ; 'tis left, for Glory :

Spilt in my Country's Cause : in *Yours*, fair Scorners !

Take Safety—'tis *my* Gift. Fill half *my* Throne ;

My Party calls *All* mine : Love *shares* it yours.

M E R O P E.

Party ? Thou fell Provoker, of Reproach !

Party should tremble, where a *Monarch* rules ?

M E R O P E.
P O L I P H O N T E S.

There will be Parties ; and there *must* be Kings :
And he, who best can *curb*, was form'd to reign.
— I, who *reveng'd* your Lord, by Right succeed him.

M E R O P E.

Succeed him, Traitor ?—Has he not a *Son* ?
Gods were his Great Forefathers, — *thence*, his Claim.

P O L I P H O N T E S.

Far other Value, bears *Mycene's Crown*.
Right, to rule *Men*, is now no longer held
By dull Descent, like *Land's* low Heritage :
'Tis the pluck'd Fruit of Toil — 'tis the paid Price
Of Blood, lost nobly : And 'tis, *thence*, *my* Due.

M E R O P E.

What hast thou done, thou Wretch ! to dare such Hope ?

P O L I P H O N T E S.

Bethink you, of that Day, when these proud Walls
Blush'd with the Blood you boast, from Traitor's Swords.
Review your helpless *Husband*—see your *Sons*,
Expiring, round you.—Wipe those gushing Eyes—
And view me, what I *was* : Not , then, too *low*
To share your ruffled *Passions*—Yes : 'Twas I,
From your freed Palace chas'd th' o'erwhelming Foe :
Sav'd your *Herculean Sceptre*, and its *Queen*.
—I, I, *repell'd*,—the Woes you could but *weep*.
See *there*, my Right, my Rank, my Claim to *Love*.

M E R O P E.

Hear, hear him, Heaven ! and give me back my Son.

P O L I P H O N T E S.

Yes : Let him come, this *Son* !—He shall be taught
Lessons of Glory : Taught *my* Arts to reign.
—Joy to the Blood of *Hercules* !—I, too,
Revere : Let others dread it. *My* Ambition
Climbs, *beyond* Progeny—To spring *from* Gods,
Is less, than mine—who, *like* a God, *command*.

M E R O P E.

If thou wouldst emulate a God, be *just* :
Men can be *brave*, too boldly.—*Hercules*

Sav'd

A T R A G E D Y.

9

Sav'd many a King—But, did he *steal* their *Diadems*?
—Woud'st thou resemble *Hercules*?—Protect
Unfriended Innocence. Assert thy Prince.
Restore th' unhappy Wand'rer to my Arms;
Cease to afflict; and *give* him, to my Fondness.
—Thus, cou'd thy Influence move, *so* try'd, *so* courted,
Who knows—for, Gratitude has Power, *like* Love—
Who knows—how far I *might* forget my Glory—
And—if Peace dwells with thee—*Expect* it *not*—
I will not bid you hope—that I *can* stoop
So low.—*Bend*, I am sure, I *cannot*.

[Exit Merope.]

S C E N E IV.

P O L I P H O N T E S, E R O X.

E R O X.

Ent'ring, I heard her too presumptuous Scorn,
And wonder'd, at your Patience! Waits a King,
For a weak Woman's *Wish*, to fix his Throne?
Greatly and bravely have you clear'd your Way
To the Hill's Foot: Yet, when it courts your climbing,
Fall back, to *figh*; and seek *her* Hand, to lead you!

P O L I P H O N T E S.

Near, as thou think'st I stand, my wariest Eye
Marks, 'twixt the Throne and me, a *Precipice*,
Where Faith or I fall headlong.—Does not *Merope*
Know, her *Eumenes* near?—Shou'd he return,
Th' inconstant People wou'd with Shouts receive him,
And smoothe his way to Empire, o'er *my* Bosom.
—Thou know'st, from Proofs, most timely intercepted,
This new Boy King *returns*, and hopes *Mycene*.

E R O X.

Trust your high Fortune, and disdain to Doubt.
Foresight and *Fierceness* are the brave Man's Gods,
And his own Hand supports him.

P O L I P H O N T E S.

My late Order?

E R O X.

E R O X.

'Twas, with a silent Firmness, well obey'd.
 —From *Elis* to *Mycene*, every Road
 Is watch'd, by sleepless Warders.—If they come,
Narbas and *He*, their *Gods* must march before 'em :
 Or not *Alcides*' Blood could scape the shedding.
 Your Soldier's Zeal is warm.

P O L I P H O N T E S.

But is it *blind*?

E R O X.

It *is*.—None knows his *Name*, whose Life he waits.
 All they have yet been told is, a sad Tale,
 Of an *old wily Traitor*, leading with him,
 On murd'rous Purpose, an *Assassin Youth*,
 Urg'd by exacted Oaths, to seek *your Death*.

P O L I P H O N T E S.

But, what this Rumour, of *Misanthus kill'd*,
 Before *Alcides*' Temple?—Is that true?

E R O X.

Too sure, he fell.—I chose *his* trusty Arm,
 Join'd with his martial *Brother's*, as most fit,
 To guard that likeliest Station; where, should *Narbas*
 Dare, with his Exile, touch *Mycene's Border*,
 First, they wou'd rest, to beg That *Godhead's* Care,
 From whom their Race presumes its proud Descent.

P O L I P H O N T E S.

'Twas Forecast, worthy of a Zeal, like Thine.
 Nor cou'd thy Care have chosen an abler Hand,
 Or one more try'd in Blood, than That *Misanthus*.
 —'Twas *He*, thou know'st, that, faithful to my Cause,
 On that black Night, attending, near *Cresphontes*,
 Taught the King's Sword, amid the Dusk of Slaughter,
 To pierce its *Master's* Breast.—An Act, so daring,
 Deserv'd the Sword, tho' three rich *Gems* adorn'd it,
 He *had* it: And he *wore* it, for his Pains.

E R O X.

Yet, at *Alcides*' Temple, drew it rashly,
 And *lost* it, with his *Life*.

POLI-

A TRAGEDY:
POLIPHONTES.

11

How *scap'd* his Brother?

EROX.

Scar'd, out of Mem'ry's Use, All he cou'd tell me
Was, that the God inspir'd some *dreadful Form*!
Some more than mortal *Monster*;—And *He fled*,

POLIPHONTES.

Vile Safety!—left his Brother unreveng'd:
And shun'd a Soldier's Death.—We must be watchful.
Some in-felt *Bodings* bid me call this Stranger
Eumenes: Or his *Friend*.

EROX.

That Fear was mine:

Till, on Reflexion that he came, *alone*,
It look'd unlikely.—Chance it, as it may,
Whene're he this way comes, he comes, to *die*.

POLIPHONTES.

True.—Yet, I cou'd have wish'd to *spare this Crime*,
But, one first chosen, the Rest grow necessary:
So falls the Son.—The *Mother* must not follow.
Her, I have *Need* of. Marriage mends my Reign: |
Her rightful Title consecrates Ambition:
And Usurpation whitens into *Law*.
—The People love her: I, possessing *her*,
Hold her Friends too, in *Dowry*.—*Erox*!—thou,
Whose Fate grows close to mine, assist my Scheme.
Skill'd how to spread Craft's Nets, allure the People.
Train 'em, by ev'ry Art: poize ev'ry Temper,
Avarice will *sell* his *Soul*: Buy That, and *mould* it.
Weakness will be *deluded*; there, grow *eloquent*.
Is there a tott'ring Faith? Grapple it fast
By *Flatt'ry*: And profusely deal *my Favours*.
Threaten the Guilty. *Entertain* the Gay.
Frighten the Rich. Find *Wishes*, for the Wanton:
And *Reverence*, for the Godly,—Let none 'scape thee.
Dive into *Hearts*: Sound every Nature's *Biafs*—
And bribe Men by their *Passions*.—But, These Arts,
Already Thine, why waste I Time to *teach* thee!

Vainly,

Vainly, the *Sword* successful scales a Throne ;
 Since, Fortune *changing*, Strength's lost Hope is flown.
 But *Art*, call'd in, attracts reluctant *Will* :
 And, what were lost by Power, is gain'd by Skill.

End of the First Act.



ACT II. SCENE I.

The Palace.

MEROPE. EURICLES. ISMENE.

M E R O P E.

IS the World dumb, on my *Eumene's* Fate ?
 I S M E N E.

Calamity, too soon, had found a Tongue.

M E R O P E.

Has nothing, from the Borders, yet been heard ?

E U R I C L E S.

Nothing, that claims *your* notice.

M E R O P E.

Who is *He*,
 This Prisoner, I am told, but now, brought guarded ?

E U R I C L E S.

A rash young Stranger, caught with guilty Hand,
 Red, from the recent Marks of some new Murder.

M E R O P E.

A *Murder* ! an *unknown* !—WHOM, has he kill'd ?
How ? and *where*, was it ?—I am fill'd with Horror.

I S M E N E.

Oh ! Sense too lively, of maternal Love !

All

All Things alarm your Tendernefs. You hear
Chance fpeak : and take her Voice, for That of Nature.

M E R O P E.

What is his *Name*? whence *came* he?—Why *unknown*?

E U R I C L E S.

He feems, and is, if Truth may trust Appearance,
A Youth of that foft Stamp, which Fortune leaves
To Nature's gentleft Care; fome Nymph's *Adonis*
Whofe Eye, might fooner be fuppos'd to kill
Th' unpity'd Maid, than his gay Sword the Man.

M E R O P E.

Whom (*tell* me) has he *kill'd*?—answer.—I'll *fee* him.

E U R I C L E S.

What ftrange Emotion, This.—

M E R O P E.

No Matter.—bring him.

If I difcover Guilt, 'tis mine to *punifh* :

If wrong'd, I owe him *Mercy*.

E U R I C L E S.

—Should he have Merit,

'Tis plac'd fo low, by Fortune.—

M E R O P E.

Fortune's Faults,

Where Merit fuffers, call on Kings, to *mend* 'em.

E U R I C L E S.

What can a Wretch like This *deferve*, from Power?

M E R O P E.

O, *Euricles*! look *inward*: ask thy Heart.

Be, for a Moment, but, This Wretch, *Thyself*—

And, *then*, acquit the Power, that fcorn'd to note thee:

—Besides, who knows? he may—be *still*, prompt Fear.

Perhaps, my troubled Mind starts Hints too lightly.

Hearts that have Everything to fear, flight Nothing.

—Let him be brought.—I will, myself, examine him.

E U R I C L E S.

Your Will *must* be obey'd.

M E R O P E.

Go, my *Ifmene*!

Bid

Bid those who guard the Pris'ner bring him hither.

Exit Ismene.

[*Euricles, offering to go.*]

M E R O P E.

Stay, *Euricles*.

Stay : and partake more Terrors—Cou'd you think it ?
 Press'd by new Sorrows, I forget my past,
 And have not yet inform'd you——*Poliphontes*
 Has dar'd demand my *Hand*: dar'd—talk of *Marriage*;

E U R I C L E S.

Oh ! Queen !

I know his Offer *Insult* : know, It stains
 Your Name. Yet, blushing, *add*,—Your forc'd Con-
 Grown infamously *necessary*,——stands, [sent,
 The sole, safe Bar, 'twixt All your Race, and *Ruin*.

M E R O P E.

'Tis Horror, but to *think*, so vile a Dream !

E U R I C L E S.

So thinks the *Army*.——So, the *Senate* thinks.
 So, think th' exacting *Gods* :——and, so—

M E R O P E.

The *Gods*!—

Why were *They* nam'd?—Cou'd they forgive such *Fall* ?
 From their own Offspring, to a Son of Clay !

E U R I C L E S.

The King, your Son——

M E R O P E.

Ah ! Name not *Him*.——How, *Euricles* !

How wou'd He thank, my Choice of *such* a Father ?

E U R I C L E S.

Princes grow wise by Sorrows. He will see
 That hated Choice the Root of all his Safety.

M E R O P E.

What, what, have you been telling me ?

E U R I C L E S.

Hard Truths :

Due, from firm Loyalty, to weak Distress.

M E R O-

MEROPE.

Can *Euricles* then plead, for *Poliphontes*!

EURICLES.

I know him guilty :—but, I know him *rash* :Know him *resistless* : know him *childless*, too ;And know, you love *Eumenes*.

MEROPE.

Loving *Him*,How can I chuse but *bate*, the Hand that wrongs him ?Princes shou'd be *above* these Self-securings :

And born, to live for Truth—or die for Glory.

[*Sits and weeps regardless of Eumene's Entrance.*]

SCENE II.

MEROPE. EURICLES. ISMENE. *Guards,*
*with EUMENES, in Chains.*EUMENES.—(*To Ismene.*)Is That the *Queen*, so fam'd for Miseries ?

ISMENE.]

It is.

EUMENES.

How sweetly awful!—how *adorn'd*, by Sorrows!

ISMENE.

Why dost thou pause ? the Queen admits thee nearer.

EUMENES.

No wonder, so much Sweetness, *so distress'd*,Mov'd, even so greatly distant,—as to *me* :

And drew me, from my Desert!—Give me Leave

To stand, a while.—and gaze unmark'd—and *note* her.—O, ye protecting *Gods* ! whate'er becomesOf an abandon'd, nameless Thing, like *me*,Bless this *Supreme Unfortunate* !

ISMENE.

Madam!—the *Prisoner* waits.MEROPE.—*Turning, to observe him.*A *Murderer*, This!—

Come forward, Stranger.

—A

—A Mien like this, a Murd'rer's!—*Can* it be,
That Looks, so form'd for Truth, so mark'd for Inno-
cence,

Cover a cruel Heart?—Come *nearer*, Youth!
Thou art unhappy; bid That Fate *protect* thee:
And speak, as to an Ear that loves the Wretched.
Answer me now.—Whose was the Blood thou shed'st?

E U M E N E S.

Oh, Queen!—Yet—for a Moment—spare my Tongue.

M E R O P E.

Murder, and *Modesty*!—Whence, all this Shame?

E U M E N E S.

Respect, Confusion,—something, *here*—*un-nam'd*,
And never felt, till *now*,—have bound my Tongue.
But—oh! do Justice, to your Power to shake me;
And, let not *Hesitation*—pass—for *Guilt*.

M E R O P E.

Go on—Who was he, whom, I'm told, thou ha'st kill'd?

E U M E N E S.

One, who with Wrongs, and Insult, urg'd my Rashness.
Young Blood takes Fire too aptly.

M E R O P E.

Young!—was he young?

Ice, at my conscious Heart, were *warm*—compar'd
With what he chills my Soul with!—Did'st thou *know*
him?

E U M E N E S.

I did *not*. All *Mycene's* Earth, and Air,
Her Cities, and her Sons, are new, to *me*.

M E R O P E.

What, was he *arm'd*, this young Assaulter? came he
With *Malice*? or for *Robbery*? Be of Comfort.
If he attack'd thee, thy Defence was necessary.
And sad Necessity makes All things just.

E U M E N E S.

Heaven is my Witness, I provok'd him not.
'Tis not in Valour's Wish, to *offer* Insult:
And sure! it is no *Crime*, to check it, *offer'd*.

M E-

M E R O P E.

On, then—relate the Chance, that led thee hither.

E U M E N E S.

Entring your Borders, I beheld a *Temple*,
 Sacred to *Hercules*; the God, my Soul
 Low, as my Lot was cast, *aspires* to Honour.
 —What shou'd I do? bare Vor'ry as I was!
 I had *no Off'rings*: brought no *Victims*, with me.
 Poor, and oppres'd by Fortune, what I *cou'd*
 I *gave*—I knelt, and pour'd a *Heart* before him,
 Warm, as a hundred Hecatombs! pure, humble,
 Pious, and firm.—Th'Unhappy *can* no more.
 I ask'd not, for *myself*, his undue Blessing.
 I pray'd Protection, to his *own* high Race:
 For, I had *heard*, Great Queen! your Wrongs *requir'd* it.
 The *Present God*, methought, *receiv'd* my Prayer.
 His Altar trembled; and his Temple rung!
 Keen, undulating. Glories beam'd, about me:
 I know not how I *bore* it!—but, my Heart,
 Full of the Force infus'd, at once grew *Vaster*.
 My swelling Courage, far *above myself*,
 Sustain'd me:—and I *glow'd*, with All the God.

M E R O P E. (*Rising in Emotion.*)

Go on. Methinks, the God thou nam'st speaks *in* thee!
 And Ev'ry *Hearer* glows, as warm'd as Thou!

E U M E N E S.

I bow'd, and left the Temple—Following, came
 Two Men, of haughty Stride, with angry Lowre:
 Roughly, accosting, they reproach'd my Prayer.
 How did I dare, they ask'd, sollicite Heaven,
 To aid Sedition's Purposes? No God
 Shou'd *save* a Wretch like me, prescrib'd by Power.
 —I heard, astonish'd; and prepar'd to speak:
 When, with impatient Fierceness, Each rais'd Arm,
 With Rage conjoin'd, came on.

M E R O P E. *Interrupting.*

To wound thee?—

Both!—Came they,

Both,

M E R O P E.

E U M E N E S.

Both, with Madman's Frenzy,
Struck at my Breast, ignobly.

M E R O P E.

Thou has eas'd me.

Go on. — These Men had Souls, that match'd their Fate.

E U M E N E S.

Un-arm'd, and inoffensive, so surpriz'd,
The God I had address'd *repaid* my Prayer.
—Warding the weakest Stroke, with swordless Hand,
Swiftly I clos'd, and seiz'd the wrested Steel
From Him whose stronger Arm more nearly press'd me.
Seiz'd it with Lightning's Swiftneſs: for, Oppreſſion
Rowſes Diſtreſs, to Vengeance.—On Himſelf,
I turn'd his pointed Weapon: ſav'd *my* Breast,
And plung'd it in His own.—He fell.—The Other
Started, and curs'd: but, like a Coward, *fled*,
False to his dying Fellow.—Mighty Queen,
This is the ſad ſhort Truth. May the kind Power
I bow'd to, touch your Ear; and move your Pity!

M E R O P E.

She were a Tygreſs, that cou'd hear this Tale,
And pauſe, upon thy Pardon — Still, go on:
How wer't thou ſeiz'd? hide Nothing: and hope All.

E U M E N E S.

Shock'd by uncertain Dread for what was done,
I gaz'd aſtoniſh'd round: and mark'd, beneath,
Where, at a Furlong's Diſtance, the Salt Wave
Broke on the Shore. Sudden I ſnatch'd the Corps,
And, haſt'ning to the Beach, gave it to the *Sea*.
That done, I ſigh'd, and fled: Your Guards, great Queen,
For what eſcapes ſuch Eyes, as *Heaven's*, and *Yours*!
Unſeen by me, mark'd all; follow'd, and took me.

M E R O P E.—*To Euricles.*

Did he *reſiſt*, when ſeiz'd?

E U M E N E S.

I cou'd not, Madam.

The Name of *Merope* diſarm'd my *Will*.

They

They told me they were yours. I bow'd, and yielded.
Gave 'em my new-gain'd *Sword*: and took their *Chains*.

E U R I C L E S.

This Youth, by Him he kill'd, was judg'd *Another*.

M E R O P E.

Oh! I have noted All: and Heaven was *just*.

—Retire, to farther Distance, gentle Youth.—

I'll tell thee, *Euricles*!

Methought, at every Word this Wanderer spoke,
Pity—or Something, *tenderer* than Pity,
Clung to my aking Heartstrings! nay, 'twas *stranger*!
For, I will tell thee All.—*Cresphontes*' Features,
Heav'ns, what Ideas Hopes and Fears can raise!
My dear dead manly *Lord's* resembled Features;
I saw, and trac'd, (I blush, to think what Folly!)
Trac'd,—in this Cottage Hero's honest Face.

I S M E N E.

Compassion is a kind and generous Painter.

—Yet, Truth Herself must grow as *blind*, as Fortune,
Ere she cou'd look on That unhappy Youth;
And find him *less*, than worth her kindest Pity.

E U R I C L E S.

Ismene speaks my Thoughts. He's innocent.
The Gods have stamp'd their Mark of Candor on him;
And no *Impostor's Art* inhabits there.

M E R O P E. (*To Eumenes.*)

Again, approach me.—In what Part of *Greece*
Did it please Heaven to give thee Birth, good Youth?

E U M E N E S. (*Advancing.*)

In *Elis*, generous Queen.

M E R O P E.

In *Elis*.—Tell me.

I hop'd, it had been nearer.—Hast thou, ever,
In thy low Converse, heard the Swains, thy Neighbours,
Mention the Name of *Narbas*?—or *Eumenes*?—
—The Last, thou *must* have heard of.

E U M E N E S.

Never, Madam.

M E R O P E.

M E R O P E.

Never?—That's *strange!* what then was thy Condition?
What thy Employment? and thy Father's Name?

E U M E N E S.

My Father was a *Shepherd*: learn'd, and wise;
Prince of the Sylvan Shades, and Past'ral Vale,
He led th'attracted Hearts of list'ning Swains,
And pleas'd 'em into Subjects—in himself
Too humble, for Distinction—had not Virtue
Compell'd him into Notice.—

He liv'd un-envied: for, excelling All,
He veil'd superior Eminence, by *Modesty*:
No claim'd Exemption eas'd his Life from *Care*:
Peacefully poor! and reverently belov'd!
His fleecy Harvests fed him:—and, his Name
Was *Policletes*, Madam.

M E R O P E.

What thy *Own*?

E U M E N E S.

Low, like my past'ral Care—to Cottage Ears
Adapted—and unform'd for your Regard.
—Yet, *Elis*, oft, may deign to speak of—*Dorilas*.

M E R O P E.

Oh! I have lost my Hope. Heaven mocks Relief:
And every starting Spark is quench'd, in Darkness:
So, then, your Parents held no *Rank* in *Greece*?

E U M E N E S.

Did Rank draw Claim from Goodness, they have Rights
Wou'd leave all Place behind 'em, Inborn Virtue
Can borrow no Enlargement, but lends all
That keeps *Contempt* from Titles.

M E R O P E.

Every Word

He utters has a Charm!—But, *Why*, at home
So bless'd, and, to *such* Parents, doubly dear,
Didst thou, forgetful of the Care thou owd'st 'em,
Quit their kind *Cott*, and leave 'em to their *Tears*?

E U M E N E S.

A vain Desire of *Glory*, first seduc'd me.

Oft

Oft had I heard my Father mourn *Mycene*,
 Weep, for her Civil Wars, and fuff'ring *Queen*.
 Oft, had He charm'd my young, aspiring, Soul,
 With Wonder, at your Firmness!—So, inflam'd,
 I learnt, by slow Degrees, to think my *Youth*
Disgrac'd, by home-felt Virtues: Weigh'd the Call
 Of Glory, against *Duty*; and grew bold
 To hope, my humble Aim might add some Aid
 To prop your warring Standards.—See! great Queen,
 The only Motive of my erring Rashness.
 For, Heaven has taught me, tho' it loves your Cause,
 I merit my Distress: who left my Father,
 Wanting, perhaps, in Age's feeble Calls,
 Some Help, I might have lent him.—'Twas a Fault.
 But, 'twas my *first*: And I may live, to mend it.

M E R O P E.

[*aside*.

Methinks, I hear *Eumenes*—So, my Soul
 Informs me, had *He* known Descent, thus lowly,
 So, my *Eumenes* wou'd have thought, and spoke.
 —Such, is his Age, where'er conceal'd he mourns:
 Perhaps too, such his Fortune—driven, like *This*,
 From Realm to Realm, a Wand'rer, thus unknown!
 Friendless, and hopeless, and expos'd to Poverty!
 —I will have Pity, on this Youth's Distress:
 And cultivate his Fortune.—What bold Noise?

[*Shouts heard without*.

Whence can such Rudeness flow!—What is't, *Ismene*?

I S M E N E.

[*at a Window*.

All Ills are *Poliphontes*. The vile Rabble
 Shout their sure Vote, for Treason. *Poliphontes*
 Is *King*, proclaim'd—and Hope is now no more.

E U M E N E S.

Oh! for the *Sword*, once more, your Guards took from me!
 Now, now, I *feel* these Chains: Now, first, they *bind* me.

M E R O P E.

Give him his Sword. Let him be free, as Air.
 Honest Proposer!—but, *Thy* Help's too weak,
 To prop a Throne, in Danger.—

E 3

E U.

M E R O P E.

E U M E N E S.

O, Queen!—*forgive* Presumption, in the *Poor*,
 When *They* dare pity Greatness.
 All have their Mis'ries—but, when *Crowns* grow wretched,
 'Tis Arrogance, in *mean* ones, to complain.

[*Exit Eumenes.*]

E U R I C L E S.

Too fatally, I prophesied.——Confess
 This hard Necessity: which, now, you find;
 And *seem*, at least, to sooth the Tyrant's Hope.

M E R O P E.

I misconceiv'd the Gods. I durst not dream.
 They cou'd have bid Guilt thrive: and given up *Virtue*.

E U R I C L E S.

They *will not*, Madam.

M E R O P E.

So, my sad Heart, still,
 Struggles to hope: and, if they mark my *Woe*,
 They will forgive my *Rashness*.

E U R I C L E S.

Come what must!
 I will assemble round you the few faithful,
 And, failing to protect, partake your Fall.

[*Exit Euricles.*]

S C E N E III.

M E R O P E. I S M E N E.

M E R O P E.

O, People! People! They, who trust your Faith,
 Bids the wild Winds blow constant.

I S M E N E.

The *People's* Voice is call'd, the Voice of Gods.

M E R O P E.

What villain Baseness wants some bold Pretence
 That drags in *Heaven*, to grace it? Thefts, Plots, Perjuries,
 Avarice, Revenge, the bloody Zeal, of *Pride*,

And

A T R A G E D Y.

23

And unforgiving Bitterness of Heart ;
All—have their Gods to friend ! their Priests, to sanctifie.

S C E N E I V.

M E R O P E. I S M E N E. E U R I C L E S,
with a Sword.

E U R I C L E S.

Sorrow on Sorrows bear down Hope's last Prop.
 Now, be a Queen, indeed !—arm your great Heart,
 With Preparation, to its utmost Stretch :
 —For, if it stands *this* Shock, its Power's immortal.

M E R O P E.

No—I am sinking, from all *Sense* of Pain :
 And shall grow *safe*, by Want of Strength to suffer.
 Speak—there is now but one sad Truth to dread :
 And my Soul waits it heard ;—then, rests, for ever.

E U R I C L E S.

It has pleas'd Heaven—this *Sword* ! this fatal *Sword* !

M E R O P E.

I understand thee ; thou woud'st say, he's *dead*.

E U R I C L E S.

Oh ! 'tis too surely so : th' atrocious Crime
 At last, succeeded—and all Care is vain.

M E R O P E.

Gods ! Gods !—'tis done.—now all your Bolts have
 struck me.

I S M E N E.

Guard her distracted Brain !

E U R I C L E S.

Save her, kind Heaven !

M E R O P E.

What have I done ? *Where* have I been ?

E U R I C L E S.

Alas ! where Grief, too oft,
 Has left, th' Unhappy ——recollect.

Oh! *Euricles*: I recollect, too much.

Trust my sustaining Heart, it breaks not, *yet*.

Comfort's brief Clouds, methought, came shadowing,
o'er me.

But I am *found*, again: a Wretch, so friendless,

That *Madness* will not lend Relief: but *spurns* me.

E U R I C L E S.

Perish, That young, that impious Hypocrite!

That ill-admir'd Attractor of your Pity:

Whom your Protection spar'd—for fancied Virtue!

M E R O P E.

Who?—What?—

I S M E N E.

Not Dorilas?

E U R I C L E S.

Him, Him,—That Dorilas.

M E R O P E.

Monster! beyond all Credit of Deceit!

I S M E N E:

He!—'tis impossible.

E U R I C L E S.

He was the Murderer.

I bring too clear a Proof. Passing, but now,

I found him waiting: freed him from his Chains;

And, to re-arm him, for the Cause he chose:

Call'd for his *Sword*—Which, as he stretch'd his Hand

To take, I mark'd, and trembled at the View,

These once-known *Gems*—too well remember'd, *here!*

M E R O P E—*taking the Sword.*

Oh, All ye sleeping Gods! 'twas my *Cresphontes*

'Twas the *King's* Sword. *Narbas*, beyond all Doubting,

Sav'd it, that dreadful Night, for my *Eumenes*.

Oh! what a false vile Tale this Flatterer form'd,

To cheat us into Pardon!

Take the dumb dreadful Witness from my Sight.

[giving Euricles the Sword.]

Yet,

Yet, stay——return it me.——

[resumes the Sword—and kneels.

—I thank ye—Gods !

Thank your inspiring Justice : and *accept it.*

Live, *but* to thank you,—for this dire, due, Sacrifice ;

Which, from the childless Mother's widow'd Hand,

Your Heav'n-directed Vengeance well *demands.*

[she rises.]

Yes. I will *beat* it, on my Husband's Tomb,

Deep, in the *bleeding* Murd'rer's panting Heart ;

Then, scorning *Poliphontes*, pierce my *own* ;

So, die, reveng'd, and safe,—*absolving* Heaven.

——Go, *Euricles.*——

E U R I C L E S.

Not so.—Yet *bear* his Sight :

That, from his own dire Mouth, we may compel

Discovery, of his Guilt's commission'd *Cause* :

And, to the Bottom, search this fatal Tale.

[Exit Euricles.]

I S M E N E.

Erox !——the Tyrant's Minister of Death.

S C E N E V.

M E R O P E. I S M E N E. E R O X.

E R O X.

[aside.]

Now, aid me, wily Powers of winning Art !

M E R O P E.

How now ! What bold Intrusion plac'd thee here ?

E R O X.

Queen, of the Kingdom's Lord ! his Heart's high
Empress !

Suffer a Voice unequal to the Task,

To wrong th' intrusted Sense of *his* told Grief

Who sends me to *condole* you.——*Poliphontes,*

Had you but smooth'd that Brow's Majestic Bend,

I meant to have said, the *King*,—this Moment, heard
The Fate, most pitied, of the Prince, your *Son*
Heard, and takes equal Part, in all your Wrongs.

M E R O P E.

More, than his Part, he takes, in what is Mine.
Else, had he never dar'd aspire, to seize
His Master's Throne; nor *Name* my murder'd Son.

E R O X.

Wishing, he waits but *Leave*. Respect is *delicate*,
And wou'd not, un-admitted, *now*, approach.
Fain wou'd he talk of Comfort, to your Sorrows,
Who, weeping, wants the Power to curb his *own*.

M E R O P E.

What wou'd your artful Sender come, to *say*?

E R O X.

To beg, that to *his* Hand you wou'd commit
This hateful Murd'rer's *Punishment*.—He glows
For Vengeance in your Cause. Shou'd think his Claim
Unworthy a Crown's Trust; less worthy *yours*,
Cou'd he forget, that *Justice* props a Throne.

M E R O P E.

No. Tell him *no*. My Hand revenges, here.
Too short of Reach, Heaven knows! but, what it *can*
It *shall*: and neither asks, nor bears, *his* Aid.

E R O X.

The King too tenderly regards your Will,
To cross it, ev'n in *Anger*—less, in *Reason*.
—I humbly take my Leave.

M E R O P E.

I grant it, gladly. [Exit Erox.

Hunted on every Side, why waits Distress,
Till still *new* Growths of Anguish, *more*, oppress?
How poor a Thing is *Life*, drag'd on to Age,
To stand, the pitied Mark, of Fortune's Rage!
Death shuts out Mis'ry: and can, best, restrain
The Bite of Insult, and the Goad of Pain.

The End of the Second A C T.



A C T III. S C E N E I.

*The Tomb of CRESPHONTES.*N A R B A S *alone.*

HAIL venerable Scene! Hail sacred Shade!
 Hail sad-sought *Manes* of my long-lov'd Lord!
 My Eyes last Object on *Mycenian* Earth,
 Was thy dear Life and Empire lost in Blood;
 Now late returning, their first mourning Search,
 Finds in this cold still Tomb, the whole shrunk Reach
 Of thy contracted Reign! Yet here, ev'n here,
 Were thy *Eumenes* render'd back, even here
Narbas had held some hope to sooth thy Ghost.

How shall I meet his *Mother's* mournful Eye,
 Who bring *new* Weight, to Woes o'ercharg'd before.
 From every madd'ning Street, I hear loud Shouts,
 Those execrable Bawds, to flatter'd Power!
 Proclaim the Traitor *Polipbontes*, King.
 He! who, from Clime to Clime, track'd our sad Way!
 Held, like a hunted Deer, his Prince, in Chace;
 Hot in Pursuit, for *Murder*!—Each known Prospect,
 Each Point, each Outlet of this neighb'ring Palace,
 Brings to afflicted Mem'ry some new Stroke
 Of Sorrow, fresh to Pain—tho' fifteen Winters
 Have snow'd their whiteness on me, since they fell!
 Wou'd, I cou'd find the Face of some old Friend!
 But, what Court Friendship's Life *lasts*, fifteen Winters:
 —Soft. Whom has Heaven sent, here! If Innocence—
 Dwells yet on Earth, such Looks as these must *hous*e it.

[*Starts, as Ismene comes nearer.*]Bless the resembled *Mother's* copied Softness!

'Tis

'Tis my *Ismene*: 'Tis my own dear *Daughter*.
 Time cannot hide her, from a Parent's Eye:
 Child as she was—and chang'd since last I saw her,

S C E N E II.

Narbas, *Ismene*, follow'd by a Train of Virgins in white,
 who bring Baskets, and strew Flowers on the Tomb.

I S M E N E.

Who is this bold Unknown? So sagely form'd!
 Yet indiscretely rude—at such an Hour,
 To break, abruptly, on the Queen's sad Purpose!

N A R B A S.

Fairest, of Forms——

I S M E N E.

Who *are* you?

N A R B A S.

Chide me not,

Sweet Picture of the Powers, who shed soft Pity!
 —I am a nameless, friendless, weak, old Man.
 Once, I was Servant, to the Queen *you* serve;
 O, grant the gracious Privilege, to *see* her.

I S M E N E.

Rev'rend, and Wise! The first, I see you *are*:
 The last, my Heart conceives you—what a Time
 Have your misguided Wants unaptly chosen!
 Your Sight wou'd, now, offend her.—Deep Distress,
 From dire Solemnity of Purpose, brings her,
 —'Twere prudent to withdraw.

N A R B A S.—

[*in a low Voice,*

Come near——*Ismene*.

I S M E N E.

Immortal Powers! Who can it be?—He knows me!
 Fain wou'd I dare mix *Hope*, with Fear and Wonder.

[*approaching him.*

N A R.

N A R B A S.

Thou art my *Child*. Kind Heaven has sent thee, to me.
—Be cautious—and observe.

I S M E N E

[*Kneeling.*

Prophetic Heart!

Oh, Sir—I *cannot* speak!

N A R B A S,

[*raising her.*

Hide thy Surprise,

Ere yet some dang'rous *Note* detects our Meeting.—Soft as thy Eyes *Ismene*, be thy *Voice*.

And answer to my Question—round this Tomb.

Why thus assembled moves that virgin Train?

I S M E N E.

Alas! the afflicted Queen,
Distracted comes,—to offer on this Tomb,
Her Life's *last* Sacrifice—a dreadful Victim!
—The *Murd'rer* of her Son.

N A R B A S.

Eumenes, dead?—

I S M E N E.

Alas, Sir! cou'd you be a Stranger to it?

N A R B A S.

Blast! of my Soul's best Hope.—Who *dar'd* this
Villainy?

I S M E N E.

A Youth, who found him in *Alcides' Temple*.

One, from whose Air of manly Modesty

None, surely cou'd have fear'd—behold! he *comes*.

That fetter'd Criminal is He.—Oh, Sir!

Where will you, now, be hid?

N A R B A S.

In Death, *Ismene*:If I now hear and see—and am not *dreaming*!

I S M E N E.

From the Queen's Eye, I dare no longer.—

N A R B A S

[*holding her.*

Stay.

Queens, Kings, nor Gods, shall tear thee from my Arm,
Till

Till thou hast heard me fully.

S C E N E III.

Solemn Procession to a Dead March. Merope. Euricles, with the Sword. Eumenes, in Chains. Guards. Priests, as to Sacrifice — The Queen goes up weeping, and kneels silent, at the Tomb. While the Rest range themselves, on each Side the Scene.

N A R B A S, to I S M E N E.

Some black-soul'd *Fiend*, some Fury ris'n from Hell,
Has darken'd all Discernment! — Call'dst thou not
That fetter'd Youth the *Murd'rer* of *Eumenes*?

I S M E N E.

I call'd him so, too truly.

N A R B A S.

He is *Eumenes*.

What angry God misleads the Queen, to Madness?
She dreams *Eumenes kill'd* — and kills *Eumenes*!

I S M E N E.

Now are my Heart's late Tremblings well explain'd.
Quick let me rush, and warn her erring Hand.

N A R B A S.

Not, for a thousand Worlds — to save him, So,
Were but to lose him, *Surer* — *Poliphontes*
Has Ears and Eyes too near us. —

I may anon find Means, when all are busied
To hide myself, unmask'd, amid't the Crowd.

Sad and solemn Musick. Then a SONG, of Sacrifice: Mr. Beard, as Chief Priest.

Hear, from the dark and silent Shade!

Hear, ye pale Bands of Death!

Gliding from Graves, where once your Bones were laid,
Receive a Murd'rer's Breath.

Chorus,

A T R A G E D Y.

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Chorus, of Priests and Virgins.
Receive a Murd'rer's Breath.

M E R O P E, *rising and coming forward.*
Where is this Victim—odious, to All Powers,
But *one*,—the dreadful *Nemesis*?

The Guards bring up Eumenes.
E U R I C L E S.

Yet, ere he dies,
'Twere fit, some Force of Torture should compel him
To name his vile Accomplices.

M E R O P E.

It shall.

Say, Monster! what provok'd thee to this Guilt:
And what Associates join'd thee.

E U M E N E S.

I appeal

The Gods, who find it fit my Soul shou'd buy,
At this dear Rate, the Moment's Hope you lent it;
Those *Gods* can *witness* for me; They! who curse
The perjurd, and disclaim the Base one's Safety.
My Lips detest Imposture:

—Nor know I, by what Change, in Heav'ns high Will,
I, who of late so blest'd, had touch'd your *Pity*,
Fall, now, beneath your *Anger*!

M E R O P E, *taking the Sword from Euricles.*

View this Sword.

Know you the dreadful Object.

E U M E N E S.

Twas the Villain's,

My just Hand punish'd with it.

M E R O P E.

Seize him. Rend him.

Swift to the destin'd Altar, drag the Traitor.

He *owns* it! glories, in his bloody Crime:

And my shock'd Soul *akes*, at him.

The Guards seize him.

E U M E-

M E R O P E.

E U M E N E S—*struggling.*

Off—away—

Spare your officious Grasp.—I *will* be heard;
 One last loud Word—in Spite of Arms and Insult.
 M E R O P E—*after a Signal to the Guards, who quit*
Eumenes.

Thou then, who deal'st in Death, can'st find Death fearful.

E U M E N E S.

No, Madam! you mistake. Death shakes the *Happy*;
 But He who is a Wretch receives him gladly.
 —Yet, 'gainst imputed Guilt, the humblest, wrong'd,
 Rise, bold in Innocence.

—Tell me, nor let your Pride deface your Pity,
 Whose, so high-rated Blood was This I shed?

—If he was dear to *You*, curs'd be my Memory,
 Or I had rather lost my *Own*, than *His*.

M E R O P E.

Where has this cruel Wretch been taught Deceit?

Why was that Look, so like *Cresphontes*, His!
Half fainting.

E U R I C L E S.

Great Queen! sustain your Purpose. Think of *Vengeance*.
 The Laws of Nature,—and the Lives of Kings.

E U M E N E S.

Do Laws and Kings, then, call Injustice *Vengeance*?
 Shame on the Great! why long'd my Eyes for *Courts*?
 Courts, where the Pride of Guilt lays Claim to Honour.
 —Haughty of Heart, why have they Souls thus abject
 They threaten, praise, fright, flatter, and insult me!
 —Yet, oh! 'twas *just*.—I left my Father, rashly;
 Felt not the Pangs: weigh'd not the Tears I cost him.
 Fate drew me from my Forest's guiltless Quiet,
 Deaf to the Warnings of a Father's Wisdom:
 And a griev'd Mother's Bodings.

M E R O P E.

Mother, said he!

Barbarian! ha'st thou yet a *Mother*, left thee?
 I was a Mother too—till Thy fell Hand

Depriv'd.

Depriv'd me of a Son——and all Life's Comforts.

E U M E N E S.

A Son!——*your* Son?

M E R O P E.

Mine, Monster! Murd'rer! Mine.

E U M E N E S.

If *Such* was my Misfortune, Such my *Curse*,
If Heaven has made it *possible*——that He,
Who in a fatal Moment, err'd—and fell
By my ill-destin'd Rashness, was *Your* Son,
Earth holds not such another Wretch as I am!
And Mercy's faintest Glimpse shou'd shun to reach me.
*Eumenes, here, offers to speak, and Merope
interrupts him.*

Mercy! thou Hypocrite.——If thou dar'st *pray*,
Raise thy dumb *Hands*: and ask, in vain, from Heaven,
The Mercy, thou deniedst my dying Son.

E U M E N E S.

Yet hear——

M E R O P E.

Stop his detested Mouth;
Force the doom'd Victim to the Altar's Foot;
Veil him from *Light*, no more to be beheld:
Hide his quench'd *Eyes*, for ever.

*Two Priests approaching, with a Veil, he snatches
it, and throws it from him.*

E U M E N E S.

Off! ye vain *Forms*!

Cover the Eyes of *Cowards*: Mine disdain ye.
Mine can, with stedfast and *advancing* Scorn,
Look in Death's *Face*, fulllighted.—When It comes
'Tis to be *met*, not *bid*.——

Welcome, Eternal Day;——*Bad World*, farewell.

*Advances, between the Priests, to the Tomb—follow'd
by the Queen, Euricles, Ismene, &c.*

M E R O P E. *At the Tomb—with the Sword drawn,
and Eumenes kneeling ready.*

Shade, of my murder'd *Husband*!—*hear* my call.

D

Chorus

M E R O P E.

*Chorus, of Singer's Voices.**Oh! hear.*

M E R O P E.

Soul of my bleeding Son! hear, thou——

*Chorus of Singer's Voices.**Oh! hear.*

M E R O P E.

Un-expiated Souls!—if, in those Glooms,
 Where walk the fullen Ghosts of earth-wrong'd Kings,
 You hear Atonement's Voice, and wait Redrefs,
 Rise, from your dire Domains!

*Chorus, of Singer's Voices.**Oh! rise.*

M E R O P E:

———Thou, last,

Tremend'ous Power! pale Goddess! present, still,
 To direful Vengeance! nerve this lifted Arm,
 And thus assisting———

*Ismene preventing the Blow, Narbas breaks
 into Sight, and cries out loudly,*

Stay, stay that bloody Purpose.

Death has already been too busy, here:
 And Heaven disclaims such Sacrifice.

M E R O P E, *in a frightened and trembling Attitude,*
 Who art thou?

E U R I C L E S.

O, 'tis Narbas!

Cautious conceal this chance, or Ruin finds him.

*I S M E N E,—aside—to the Queen.*Your Victim is your Son,——the Prince, *Eumenes.**Merope lets fall the Sword—astonish'd, and trembling.**E U M E N E S—rising himself to look round.*

I heard a well-known Voice, now heard no longer.
 Open, sad Eyes! once more, from the Grave's Brink,
 And find what seem'd—oh! 'tis—It is—My Father!

N A R B A S, aside, to E U M E N E S.

Hear: and be mute. Thy Fate, unwary Youth!
 Depends upon thy Silence.

E U M E-

A T R A G E D Y.

35

E U M E N E S.

Whence, O ye Powers!

Can all these Myſt'ries riſe!

M E R O P E.

Oh!—'tis too much—

And Life and I are *loſt*.

Faints: and is ſupported by Iſmene.

N A R B A S.

Aſſiſt the Queen.

I S M E N E.

Stay your unhallow'd *Rites*: the Queen's in Danger.

E U R I C L E S.

Quit, rev'rend *Prieſts*! your unpropitious Sacrifice.

[Exeunt Prieſts.

Follow me, Guards; I will ſecure your *Victim*.

E U M E N E S.

O, Father——

N A R B A S——to E U M E N E S.

Shun me: and patient wait th' important *Cauſe*.

E U M E N E S.

O, bid me, ere I die, but hope your Pardon:

And, if I leave you bleſs'd—'tis all my Prayer.

N A R B A S.

No more.—The Gods, who love, reward thy Virtue!

*[The Soldiers, and Euricles, go off,
with Eumenes.*

I S M E N E.

Kind Heaven reſtores the Queen.

M E R O P E.

Where!—whither have ye brought me?—

—*Iſmene?*—what means This!—Why weep my Virgins?

—Oh! I have *kill'd* him:—*looking wildly round her*——
for I ſee him *not*:

And I am doom'd to Pains, in Life immortal.

N A R B A S.

Eaſe your ſad Heart's too apprehenſive Startings.

Euricles has ſecur'd him: And nothing's known.

Still that kind Vision haunts me. — Art thou *Narbas*?

N A R B A S.

Let my *Tears* answer——in this Gush of Joy——

I give you back my Trust, my King *Eumenes*.

M E R O P E, *on her Knees*.

Oh, gracious Heaven! support a Woman's Weakness:

And, what my *Heart*, yet panting, fails to utter,

Take, from my Soul's touch'd Sense; and *make* my Prayer.

You are too *Great*, for Thanks! too *Good*, for Duty!

[*Rises*.

E U R I C L E S, *re-entering hastily*.

Death! to th' insatiate Tyrant's Thirst of Insult!

——This Royal Scandal, to the Name he steals,

Has, with some fatal Purpose, *seiz'd* the King;

And holds him, to examine.

M E R O P E.

Follow me.

Now shall he see, what *Marks* denote the *Queen*;

What *Difference*, 'twixt the Guilty, and the Wrong'd.

N A R B A S, *going*.

Madam!——It must not be.

E U R I C L E S.

Stay: Curb this Rashness.

M E R O P E.

Is he not mine! Is he not *yours*?——your King?

E U R I C L E S.

The moment you confess That dang'rous Truth,

No God, but hated *Hymen*, saves *Eumenes*.

M E R O P E.

There, thou hast let in Light, upon my Soul,

——Rather than *wed* this *Polyphontes*.——

N A R B A S.

Wed him?

WED——*Polyphontes*!

E U R I C L E S.

Him.

N A R-

N A R B A S.

The World's last Groan,
Wrapt in surrounding Fires, had *less* amaz'd me!

E U R I C L E S.

'Tis with That View the People call him *King*.
Since he reveng'd *Cresphontes' Blood*, they say,
He, best——

N A R B A S.

He!—Every Curse of Death surround him!
He! He reveng'd!—The Villain's own damn'd Train
Shed,—*spilt* it. I beheld 'em: Trac'd the *Fiend*
Thro' all his dark Disguises——thro' Night's Eye
Saw the pale Murd'rer stalk, amidst his Furies.
His was the half-hid Torch,—the Postern Key,
That open'd to the Rebel's Rage the Palace.
—In the pierc'd infant Breasts of *two* doom'd Innocents,
I *saw* him plunge his Poignard: Twice receiv'd it,
Deep, in my *own*, encumber'd with my Charge:
Struggling, to bear the third *saw'd* Prince to shelter;
And, track'd by my lost Blood, with Pain escap'd him.

M E R O P E.

When will my growing Horrors reach their *End*!
Oh! my fix'd Hate was *Instinct*. Something, fatal,
Dwelt on his dreadful Brow, and bad me *shun* him.
Blind! headlong! ill-discerning! noise-driv'n People!

E U R I C L E S, *looking out*.Soft! the Tyrant *comes*!

M E R O P E.

Can the Gods leave That *possible*?——

Narbas, be *bid*, this Moment—— [Exit *Narbas*.
——*Euricles*!

Fly thou——find to my mournful Son Access,
Comfort his Fears——but keep the Secret from him.
[Exit *Euricles*.

S C E N E IV.

Merope, Ismene, Poliphontes *in Nuptial Robes,*
Erox, and Train.

P O L I P H O N T E S.

Health, to my *Sovereign, late!* Now—so the States
Decree—my *Wife!*—my Sister! and my Soul!
Dress'd is the Altar; and the Priests attend.

—Nay, do not turn aside, and shun your Triumph.
Look—and admire the Wonders of your Power!
The God of Love, to-day, smoothes all my Wrinkles:
And I am taught by Joy to smile back *Youth.*

—One Care alone precedes impatient Love.
They tell me, your too tender Heart *recoil'd*:
And *lost* your purpos'd Vengeance.—Let it *be.*
Beauty was meant to *wound*, a gentler Way.
Mine, be the Stroke of Justice.—When I view
This murd'rous Stripling, thro' the Grief he brought
you,

Pity disdains his Cause; and Fate *demand*s him.

M E R O P E.

I find myself, 'tis true, too weak, for Vengeance.
Wou'd I had Power, more equal to my Wrongs!

P O L I P H O N T E S.

Leave it to *Me*: 'Tis a King's Right.—I *claim* it.

M E R O P E.

I shall *consider* of it.

P O L I P H O N T E S.

Why? what doubt you?

Slackens your Anger? that your Vengeance hesitates!
Is your Son's Mem'ry now, less dear, than lately?

M E R O P E.

Perish, the *Will*, that wrongs him! but, this Murd'rer,
This *Youth*—they tell me you suspect Accomplices—
Were it not prudent to suspend his Fate,
'Till he declares, who join'd him?

A TRAGEDY.
POLIPHONTES.

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What expect you
To clear, beyond your Son's known Fall?

M E R O P E.

His *Father's*—

That was a Cup of *Gall*.—Oh! conscious Guilt!
How dumb, thy Voice, unlook'd-for, strikes the Bold!

[*Aside.*

POLIPHONTES (*after a Pause.*)

Well—ev'n of That too, We ourself will ask him.

M E R O P E.

You are too busy, Sir! in a Pursuit,
That, least, admits *your* Quick'ning.

POLIPHONTES.

Strange Perplexity!

That what most seeks your Ease shou'd most *offend*!
But, spring it, whence it may, the *Cause* remov'd,
There, ends the Doubt, and Pain. — This Wretch
shall *die*. [Going.

M E R O P E.

Barbarian! horrible, inhuman—*Sir*!
Why have you sought to startle me?—I fear'd—
You meant to snatch my Victim from—my Vengeance.

POLIPHONTES.

But—shall he *really* die?

M E R O P E.

Die!—*Who*?—He—die?

POLIPHONTES.

This Murd'rer of your Son.

M E R O P E.

I go, this Moment;
And will, alone, examine him.

POLIPHONTES.

Stay, Madam.

This new Embarrassment, of mingled Pains;
This Tendernefs in Rage; these Hopes, Fears, Startings,
This Art, to colour some ill-hid Distress,
That casts *Confusion* o'er your troubled Soul:

Half Sentences, broke short; Looks, fill'd with Horror,
Are Nature's thin *Disguise*, to cover Danger.

—Something you will not *tell* alarms my Caution;

And bids my summon'd *Fear* take Place of Love.

——In ent'ring, here, I had a Glimpse, but now,
Of an old Man, who seem'd to shun my Presence.

Why is he fled? ——— Who was he?

M E R O P E.

Scarce yet call'd

A *King*—and see! already fill'd with Jealousies!

P O L I P H O N T E S.

Be kind, and bear your Part, then.—Burthens, shar'd,
Press light the eas'd Sustainers.—Come; your Hand.

M E R O P E.

A Moment since, you talk'd but of Revenge:

Now, 'tis again all Love——Away: Keep separate,

Two Passions, Nature never yet saw join'd.

P O L I P H O N T E S.

Let it be so, then. Death shall strait remove
That Obstacle: And but one Wish remains.

Follow, at Leisure, *you*: While I prepare.

[*Exit* Poliphontes.]

M E R O P E.

Act for me, now, and save me, Great *Alcides*!

To Power like thine, all Things are possible:

And Grief, oppress'd on Earth, finds Friends in Heaven.

Then when the woe-sunk Heart is tir'd with Care,

And every *human* Prospect bids *despair*,

Break but one Gleam of *heav'nly* Comfort, in;

And a new Race of *Triumphs*, thence, begin.

End of the Third Act.

A C T



ACT IV. SCENE I.

The Castle of *Poliphontes*.

Poliphontes. Erox.

POLIPHONTES.

SHE has *her* Views, I mine.—I shou'd have fear'd,
Some Hint's officious Reach had touch'd her Ear;
I shou'd have dreamt, her Eyes had catch'd some
Glance,
To guide *Discovery*, down the dark Abyfs,
Where my close Crime lies *veil'd*, in dumb Obscurity.
—But, that I know, she is a WOMAN—*Erox!*
And *born* to be capricious.

E R O X.

Pride—not Dis taste,
Holds out her Heart, against you.

POLIPHONTES.

Let her keep it.

My Hope is humbler, *Erox*. 'Tis her Hand
I seek: *Hearts* are Girls' Gifts to School-boy Lovers.
Now, let her Spleen start wild. When Time serves aptly,
Means shall be found to curb it —Thou art come
From founding this fierce captive Son of Wonder.
What have thy Thoughts concluded?

E R O X.

'Tis not *He*.

No Race of *Hercules* need, there, alarm you.
This but some rural Brave, of simple Nurture;
Void of Ambition's Flame: Bold, blunt and honest:
Fearless

Fearless of Menace, tasteless of Reward,
And wanting ev'n the Wish, to dare, for Power.
He cannot be *Eumenes*.

POLIPHONTES.

Who, then, is he?

E R O X.

He says he is a *Shepherd's* Son:—what, more,
He will not be provok'd, nor brib'd, to tell.
Firm without Fierceness; without Weakness, gentle:
Open as Day-light; yet, as dumb, as Death!
Spite of my Prejudice, he forc'd my Praise;
And *Hatred* must admire him.

POLIPHONTES.

Praise him on.

Be what, or whom, he may, 'tis fit he *die*.
The *People*, who conclude his Punishment
Inflicted, for *Eumenes'* fancied Murder,
Will dream that Race *extinct*; and cleave to *Me*.
So Danger comes less near: Nor shakes my Throne.
—What hast thou learnt, of that conceal'd Presumer,
Who, when the Arm of *Merope* was rais'd,
Restrain'd it, with some Power that touch'd her Soul?

E R O X.

The young Man call'd him *Father*. Chance, it seems,
In that nice Moment, brought him to his View.
He mov'd the Queen's Compassion, for his Son,
Fled, like a Wanton, from the Good Man's Care,
Who, in his Search, came sorrowing on, from *Elis*.

POLIPHONTES.

I cannot trust this Tale. Thou grow'st too credulous,
Mysterious Caution hangs too thick a *Veil*
O'er all their late Proceedings. That old Man,
Left the Queen's Presence, starting, at my Entrance.
Why was he hid, if a young Rustick's Father?
Why shou'd *my* coming fright him? He has heard
Since then, his Son's redoubled Danger dwells
But in *my* Menace: Yet he comes not near me.
I had, ere now, beheld him at my Feet,

A TRAGEDY:

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Had his Heart trembled with a Father's Terrors.

E R O X.

See, Sir! he's *free*—and mark—the Queen, how *near*!

P O L I P H O N T E S.

I note it, and determine.

———Now! my Sister.

S C E N E II.

Poliphontes, Erox, Merope, Ismene, Euricles, Eumenes,
and Guards.

M E R O P E.

You see, Sir! I dare know, and *use*, my Rights.
How had your Will presum'd to seize my Victim?
Am I but Queen of Shadows? that my Vengeance
Must move, as *you* direct it?

P O L I P H O N T E S.

Nobly urg'd!

The Victim is your Right, requires *your* Hand:
Mine had defac'd your Vengeance.—I assum'd
Pretence to aid it, but to fire your Languor.
Take Courage. I resign him. With his Blood
Wash this reluctant Faintness from your Heart:
And give it Warmth to meet me at the Altar.

M E R O P E.

Horrid, and impious, Hope!

P O L I P H O N T E S.

Looks *Love* so frightful?

E U M E N E S to *Poliphontes*.

Who taught thee to associate Love with *Cruelty*?
What Right has *Cupid* to a Captive's Blood?
—Yet, mispresume me not, that I court thy Pity—
He has too poor a View from Life, to *prize* it,
Whose Death can only serve, to shorten *Pain*.
—But, I am told, Thou call'st thyself a *King*.
Know, if thou *art* one, that the Poor have Rights:
And Power, in all its Pride, is *less* than *Justice*.
—I am a Stranger,—innocent,—and friendless,—

And

And That Protection, which thou *ow'st*, to All,
Is doubly due, to me:—For, I'm unhappy.

P O L I P H O N T E S.

Protection is for *Worth*:—Guilt calls for Vengeance.

E U M E N E S.

And what does Wrong's licentious *Insult* call for?

—In my own just Defence, I *kill'd* a Robber:

Law call'd it *Murder*; and the Queen condemn'd me.

Queens may *mistake*. Ev'n *Gods*, who LOVE, grow *partial*.

I can forgive th'Injustice of a *Mother*:

And cou'd have bless'd *her* Hand, beneath the Blow.

Nature has Weaknesses, that *err* to Virtue?

—But, What hast *Thou* to do with Mother's Vengeance?

Law, that shocks *Equity*, is *Reason's* Murder.

P O L I P H O N T E S.

So young! so wretched!—and so *arrogant*!

Methinks, the Pride of an *Alcides'* Blood

Cou'd scarce have swell'd a Soul to loftier *Boldness*!

M E R O P E.

Pity presumptuous Heat. 'Tis Youth's Prerogative.

P O L I P H O N T E S.

Mean while, how happy such unpolish'd Plainness!

To move Defence, from Art so skill'd as *Yours*.

Your Son, sure! *lives*.

M E R O P E.

Lives! and *shall* live. I trust him to the *Gods*:

They *can*—they *did*—they *will* protect him.

P O L I P H O N T E S.

What cannot Woman's Pity! None, who marks

The willing Pardon your soft Looks insure him,

Can charge your Heart with Cruelty.

M E R O P E.

My Looks,

Perhaps, hint Meanings, Prudence shou'd decline

To lend too loud a *Tongue* to.—but, there *are*,

Whose *Heart speaks* Nothing: Yet *tells All*, by Actions.

A TRAGEDY.

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POLIPHONTES.

Mark, if I speak not, *now*, my Heart's true Language.

—*Traitor! receive thy Doom* [Drawing his Sword.

MEROPE, (*interposing.*)

Strike *here, here*, Murd'rer!

Menace *my* Breast; not His.

POLIPHONTES.

Whose Heart speaks, *now*?

EUMENES.

Now, ye Immortals! not to *die*, were, *not*
To triumph.—To be pitied, *here!* so pitied!
By such a Queen as *Merope!*—'tis Glory
That every Power beneath a God might envy!

POLIPHONTES.

If you wou'd have him live, confess, *Who is he?*

MEROPE.

He——is——

EURICLES (*to Ismene.*)

Oh! we are lost.

ISMENE.

All, all, is hopeless.

POLIPHONTES.

If he has Right in *You*, be swift to *own* him:
Or, *lose* him by your Silence.

[Offers to kill Eumenes.

MEROPE.

Stay——he is——

POLIPHONTES.

Who? What?——say, quickly.

MEROPE.

He is *My SON*, *Eumenes.*

POLIPHONTES, (*starting, and aside.*)

'Tis as I *fear'd*; and all my Schemes are Air.

[Stands pensively fix'd.

EUMENES.

Heav'ns!——Did I hear *That*, rightly?

MEROPE, (*embracing him.*)

Thou art my Son.

Loud

Loud in the Face of Men and Ear of Gods,
Cressphontes was thy Father : I attest it :
 I tell it, to the *Winds* : Proclaim it——boast it,
 Hear it, *Thou* Soul of Murder ! I have *found* him :
 And, if I lose him, *now*, whole Heaven shall *curse* thee.

E U M E N E S.

I cannot comprehend it !——Yet, I kneel,
 To *thank* you—but for deigning to *deceive* me.
 Bless'd is his Fate, who dies, in such a *Dream* !

M E R O P E.

One Way, thou *art* deceiv'd.—The Mother's Love
 Forgets the Monarch's Danger.——*Poliphontes* !

P O L I P H O N T E S, (*starting.*)

Go on——I meditated——but——*speaking*, Madam.

M E R O P E.

Thou now hast wrung, from my affrighted Heart,
 The *Secret*, that oppress'd it. Thou behold'st
 Thy *King*, distress'd, before thee.—*Sigh*, if thou can'st,
 Sigh,—for the Son, Prince, Mother—Fame, and Nature.

P O L I P H O N T E S.

How to resolve will ask some needful Pause.
 —Mean while, it shakes my Faith, to trust your Story.
 You hear, the young Man's Honesty *disclaims*
 This Greatness, you wou'd lend him.

E U M E N E S.

Modest Sense

Of my unequal Worth compell'd some Doubting ;
 But, *now*, 'tis Truth contestless. Royal *Tears*
 Flow not for pitied *Falsehood* ; and *they* prove it.

M E R O P E.

Tears touch not Hearts of Flint ; and I will spare 'em.
 Bid your * *Pride* hear me——for, your Pity *cannot*.

(* *kneels.*)

See me an humble Suppliant, at your Feet,
 Now first confessing I can *fear* your Anger.
 This shou'd, beyond all Proof of Tears, *convince* you,
 That *Merope's* his *Mother*.——Still, you frown :
 I forget

My

My own long Sorrows—all my Wrongs, and Insults :
 Smile to the future——and absolve the past.
 —Let him *but breathe*—to reign, were to be *wretched* ;
 —Cruel ! you answer nothing !—look less *dreadful*.
 Ease my distracted Soul——and speak some *Comfort*.

E U M E N E S.

O, Madam ! quit that *Posture*.——My proud Heart
 Aspires to *keep* the Glory you have lent it.

——If I, indeed, was born, to call you Mother,
 Why do I see and hear you, *not a Queen* ?

[*Raises her.*

—Nor think my Soul too haughty : ——No Distress
 Absolves *Dejection* : 'Tis the Brave's *Prerogative*,
 To feel, without *complaining*.

Now !——*Strike*, Tyrant——

Courage, restrain'd from *Aét*, takes Pride to *suffer*.

P O L I P H O N T E S, (*to Merope.*)

'Tis well. I have, with just Attention, heard ;
 And, in impartial Silence, weigh'd it, all.

Your Sorrow claims some Right to call for mine :

And *his high Spirit* charms me.——I take him

[*Takes Eumenes by the Hand.*

Into my heedful Care ; remit his Sentence,

And, if found *Yours*, adopt him as my Son.

E U M E N E S.

Yours, said you ?——*Yours* !

M E R O P E.

Be patient, good *Eumenes*.

P O L I P H O N T E S.

You rule his Destiny. You know what Price
 I rate his Life at. Smile ; and meet my Wishes.

For, may the Gods, conjointly, curse my Reign,

If he *survives* Refusal of my Prayer !

——Bethink you. In an *Hour*, I shall expect you ;

Where, at the Altar, to th' attesting Powers,

You may proclaim your *Choice*. That Moment makes
 him

My *Victim*, or my Son. 'Till then, farewell.

M E R O P E.

M E R O P E.

You *cannot* be so cruel.—Leave *him*, with me.
To *see* him, might persuade me.

P O L I P H O N T E S.

See him, *there* :

See him, in *Hymen's Temple*. *Erox*, attend him.

[*Exeunt*.

E U M E N E S.

Oh, Queen! oh, Mother!

If I, already, dare assume a Right
To call you, by that dear, that awful Name :
Think, nothing, that may misbecome *your* Glory——
Do, nothing, that may mix Contempt, with *mine*.
——I leave you to the Care of Heav'n; and *die*.
Lead me to the Tyrant.

S C E N E III.

Merope, Euricles, Ismene.

M E R O P E.

Fly, follow, *Euricles*; hold thy kind Eye
Fix'd, to this Tyrant's Motions. Fain would I dream,
He threatens, but to fright me.

E U R I C L E S.

Willing Hope

So flatters, to deceive you. Too, too sure,
His Purpose! Ev'n by Nature, stern and bloody,
How *more*, when Power and Safety prompt his Cruelty!

[*Exit* Euricles.

M E R O P E.

Find thy good Father, Haste, *Ismene*; call him.
Tell him, Distress grows headstrong, and my Soul
Sickens for want of Counsel.

I S M E N E.

[*Aside*.

What a Blindness
Is Thirst of human Grandeur! Give me, Gods!
A Cottage, and Concealment. Save the Queen;

And,

And, from the Curse of Courts, remotely place me.
[*Exit* Ismene.

M E R O P E *Alone.*

No, there is none; no Ruler of the Stars,
Regardful of my Miseries.—
Oh, my lov'd Son! my Eyes have lost thee, *ever*.
I shall no more snatch Comfort, from thy Hopes,
Or wonder at thy Sweetness.—
Why have the Deities permitted this?
Why have they *sported* with a Mortal's Mind,
Unpitying it's Distraction? sent him to me
From a far distant Land? Sent him, for what!
To glut the Murd'rer's *Sword*, who kill'd his Father.
—Yet, you are *just*, ye Gods!—Amazing Darkness
Dwells o'er th' Eternal Will, and hides all *Cause*.
I must not dare to tax Almighty Power,
For what I suffer from it. Let it but *pay* me
With that curs'd Tyrant's *Punishment* attain'd:
Let me but see myself depriv'd of *Him*—
See him expell'd, from Light, from Earth, from Name,
Deep, as the chearless Voids below can plunge him!
And I will * kneel, a Wretch, and *thank* your Justice.
(* *kneeling*)

S C E N E IV.

Merope, Ismene, Narbas.

N A R B A S.

Oh! Queen! August in Woes! What *Wrongs* are
yours!

M E R O P E *rising.*

Yes, *Narbas*,—I *have* sacrific'd my Son—
Have given him up, to Death—have, madly, *own'd* him:
—What Mother, who beheld her Son, as I did,
Doom'd and endanger'd, *cou'd* have, then, kept Silence!

N A R B A S.

Gen'rous your Purpose! gloriously, you err'd:

E

And

And fell, but from a Height, 'twas Fame, to reach:
 Dry up your Tears, and summon All your Soul :
 Time presses,——and a Moment, lost, is Fate.

[*Shouts heard.*]

I S M E N E *looking out.*

Up roar, and Cries without, in rising Wildness,
 Heard from the City, reach the Palace Walls :
 Sure Sign of new Confusion !

N A R B A S.

I saw the Tyrant meet th' expecting *Priests* ;
 Attended, *not* in *Hymeneal* Robes,
 But Vestments, such as *Sacrifice* demands ;
 And Pomp of bloody Rites, at dreadful *Altars*.
 To *These*, his Hand consign'd the Victim, led :
 And deaf'ning Shouts receiv'd him.—From the Train
 Of Priestly Horrors, *this Way* mov'd their Chiefs ;
 Follow'd by loud, licentious, Bursts of Joy.
 Amid th' enormous Swell of whose coarse Roar,
 All, I distinctly heard was *Poliphontes*.

M E R O P E.

—Where are my *Guards* ? Arm'd, for my Vengeance,
 call 'em. [*Enter three Priests.*]

S C E N E V.

Merope, Narbas, Ismene, Priests.

M E R O P E.

What ! are ye here already ? — Out of my Sight,
 Ye sanctify'd *Deceits* ! You ! whose bold Arts
 Rule Rulers ! and compel even *Kings*, to *Awe* !
 Be gone, fly, vanish——

Ye Mouths of Mercy ! and ye Hands of Blood !

C H I E F P R I E S T.

Sorrows, and Wrongs, claim Privilege to *rail* :
 And Heaven's affronted *Vot'ries* must *forgive*.

M E R O P E.

Cool, in your Cruelty !——Religion's Veil

A T R A G E D Y.

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Ill cloaks Rebellion's Licence. *Death* was your Errand.
Why talk you of *Forgiveness*? — 'tis not yours.

C H I E F P R I E S T.

Not in *Death's* Cause we come ; but Heaven's——and
Love's.

If *Vows* were plighted, 'twixt the *King* and *You*,
No Power on Earth dissolves 'em.

M E R O P E.

False, as Hell!

He knows, I heard his hated Vows with Horror.
—Slight Insolence! ——To this ill-founded Charge,
Silence, and Scorn, shall answer. [turning away.]

C H I E F P R I E S T.

Gracious Sovereign!

Suspend your Anger: 'tis unjustly rais'd.
—Enlighten, and *command* us.——Found too *easy*
In one *wrong'd* Faith, we twice, perhaps, have *err'd*:
Alike deceiv'd, in *Both*.——Unbend that Brow:
And deign to teach our Doubt, what *Name* to give
This Stranger? this young Captive to the King?

M E R O P E.

Give him the Name you dare to misapply.
Call him your *King*—my Son—my lost *Eumenes*.

C H I E F P R I E S T.

Hear *That*, prophetic Soul! high Heaven!—I tremble,
In Dread, this great Discovery comes too late.
The shouting People crowd the waiting Altar:
And, erring in their Zeal, *mis-bail* the Day.
—What *can* be, shall be try'd, to cross his Doom.
They shall be taught, with bold, adventurous Speed,
To save their Sovereign's Right——and, hence, rash
Queen,

Learn due Repentance: and no more, let loose
The Rage of Wrongs, against the *Tongues of Gods*.

[Exeunt Priests.]

M E R O P E.

—This solemn Sharpness of deserv'd Reprcach,
Struck my too conscious Guilt, with infelt Awe!

I have been warm too soon : and just, too late.
 What, tho' Religion's *Guardians* taint her Tide !
 Pure is the *Fountain*, tho' the Stream flows wide :
 Too oft, her *erring Guides* her Cause, betray :
 Yet, Rage grows *impious*, when it *bars* her *Way*.

End of the Fourth Act.



ACT V. SCENE I.

A Prison.

EUMENES. NARBAS. EURICLES.

E U M E N E S.

THINK, think upon your Danger : fly, lov'd
 Father !

Fly from the Tyrant's Power, and leave me to my Fate.

N A R B A S.

All Sense of my own Danger lost, in yours,
 I threw myself, regardless, at his Feet.
 Full of the fatal Subject, I began,
 Uncautious in my Transport. Starting Conscience
Fled from the Face of Truth. He shun'd to *bear*,
 Broke short, reply'd 'twas well : gave me Permission ;
 Nay, full of seeming Zeal, *injoin'd* my coming——
 Bad me go pay my *last* short Debt, of Counsel :
 And try to bend your Heart, to meet his Will.

E U R I C L E S.

He added, that his *Queen*—he call'd her *His* !
 I blush to name her such : but so, he charg'd me.
 Since *she*, he said, in Pity but for you,
 Yields a reluctant Hand, to close with *his*,
 'Tis Time, *her Son*, whose Life she holds so dear,
 Aids his own Int'reit, and confirms *her* Safety.
 —The Rest, he paus'd and thought : but held it in,
Frown'd

Frown'd a disdainful Nod—and bad us *leave* him.

E U M E N E S.

Slowly awaking, from my Dream of Wonders,
I seem re-born, to some new World, unknown;
Where every thing, I meet with, shocks my Soul.
—You talk of *dying*, whilst I, yet, half doubt,
Whether, existing now, I really *live* !
If I am, truly, the lost Wretch I *seem*,
If in *Mycene* now inclos'd, I find
Queen *Merope*, my Mother—King *Cresphontes*
My Father, murder'd—his fear'd Murd'rer crown'd,
With his stol'n Diadem : and, in it, daring
Offer his widow'd Queen a *Hand*, stain'd, frightful,
In her first *Husband's Blood*——All This, to *me* !
Seems, while I drink in Heaven's fair Light, and view
Yon Mansion of the *Gods*, who govern Man——
Incredible ! astonishing !—and horrid !

E U R I C L E S.

'Tis horrible, indeed ! too dark for Thought !
—But, Reason's Line wants *Depth* to sound Heaven's Will.

N A R B A S.

Deign, my *devoted* Prince ! my King !—my *Son* !
Suffer me, still, to use that long-lov'd Name—
Deign but—to *live*.—Time, Chance, and Fortune's
Changes,

May vindicate your Glory.—Since the Tyrant
Tempt, to *betray*—reward him, with his *own*.
Deceive Deceivers, and Deceit grows *Virtue*.

E U M E N E S.

This, in thy Forests, *Elis* ! had I heard,
Even there, I shou'd have blush'd to hear, from *Narbas* !
But, as I am.—No more.—
Kind was your *Motives* !—pitying my *Distress*,
You, but, forgot my *Duty*.

N A R B A S.

Happy Forests !

Wou'd, Ye were Ours, once more ! there, Peace dwelt
with us :

There, Safety slept, upon unguarded Hills,
And every Tree's soft Shadow *cover'd* Anguish.

E U R I C L E S.

Soft! behold!—the Tyrant *comes!*

S C E N E II.

P O L I P H O N T E S, *To the Foregoing.*

P O L I P H O N T E S.

Retire: and wait, without.

[*Exeunt Euricles and Narbas.*

—— And Thou, rash Youth!

Whose unexperienc'd Years, and gen'rous Plainness,
Fill me with all the Pity, due to Weakness!
For the last Time I come, to bring thee Power.
Leave to *my* Toil, to smoothe thy future Paths;
And root out Faction's Thorns, which trouble Empire.
—When I am *dead*—as Age admits *short* Stay,
Thou, and my *Merope* will reign, at Ease,
And thank my painful Cares: and love my Memory.
—Why art thou dumb?—Pause on——I read thee,
rightly.

Thou hast, I know, a kind of stubborn Pride,
Call'd *Courage*—and mistak'st it, for a *Virtue*.
—'Tis *Virtue*: when Presumption drives it not:
But suffers *Thought* to guide it.

E U M E N E S.

Guiding Thought

Has held me patient, long.——Now, answer *me*.
Am I *Mycene's* Monarch?

P O L I P H O N T E S.

For thy Birth,

Be it, as Truth, or Trick, or Chance, conclude it,
If, from some low, some nameless Stock, derived,
Be humble, and advis'd—and rise to Greatness.
If happier Offspring cast thee for a *King*,

Make

Make thyself *worthy*, of the Crown I mean thee.
 —'Tis but, to wait me to the Marriage Altar,
 Where Love, and *Merope*, and Peace, attend.
 There, to the Gods and me, (*Mycene's Guardians*)
 Swear Homage, and devote thy faithful Sword.
 That done, Sports, Joys, and Safety, crown thy Youth :
 And, in thy riper Years, expect the Diadem.
 —Determine.—

E U M E N E S.

'Tis determin'd.

P O L I P H O N T E S.

Tell me *how* ?

E U M E N E S.

Why am I left *unfree* to *chuse*—yet, press'd
 To tell thee my Decision ?—The *compell'd*
 To *yield*, disgrace Consent : and make Faith doubtful.
 —I am a *Captive*. He, who holds not Freedom,
 Has not his Will his *own* :—and chuses *nothing*.

P O L I P H O N T E S.

Fierce, amid Misery ! thou, at once, art brave,
 And insolent, and wretched ! —but, beware,
 Nor trust, too far, my Pity of thy Poorness.
 I give thee, yet, some Moments, to resolve.
 I go, before thee : but, my Guards attend,
 To bring thee to the Altar. Come, determin'd
 To *swear*—and hope my Crown, and live, my Son :
 Or *die*, a Slave un-own'd, and lose thy *Name*. [*Is going.*]

E U M E N E S, (*calling after him.*)

Thou *goest* then ?

P O L I P H O N T E S, (*stopping.*)

To *expect* thee.

E U M E N E S.

I will *come*.

And *with* me, (tremble to be told it,) comes
 The *God*, that rais'd *my* Race to root out *Tyrants*.
 Soon shall the Throne thou *stol'st* no more be Thine :
 Horror and Penitence shall *pale* those *Eyes*,

Whose daring Insolence now *frown* on *Virtue*.
Menace and Insult, *then*, shall quit thy *Voice*,
And groaning *Anguish* grind it.—What the Gods
Restrain *my* Hand from reaching, *happier* Sons
Of my *immortal* Sire shall rise, to execute :
And hurl thee from a *Power*, that *hurts* *Mankind*.

P O L I P H O N T E S.

Here, *Narbas* ! *Euricles* !—You may return.
I leave him to your Lessons. Too too deeply,
He feels their past Impression. Teach him better :
Or your exacted *Heads* shall answer to me,
For every well-known Help I owe your Hatred.
—*Narbas* ! Thy Age, I think, might best be trusted.
Experience lays his Dangers open to thee.
Thou, as thou lov'st, advise him.—Whether born
The Son of *Merope*, or *Thine*, no matter.
I must adopt him mine,—or *Death* demands him.
[Exit Poliphontes:]

S C E N E III.

EUMEMES, NARBAS, EURICLES.

E U M E N E S.

Where did this ill-instructed Tyrant learn
To threaten, for Persuasion !—I suspect,
He does not *seem* to doubt, but *doubts* indeed,
I share no Blood of *Hercules*.—He's gone :
And call'd me, to his Altar.—Let us follow.

N A R B A S.

Stay.—Whither wou'd such fatal Rashness lead you ?

E U R I C L E S.

The Queen has Friends : howe'er too weak, too few :
Who dare defend her Cause. Give us but *Time*
To weigh, and to resolve, and these shall aid you.

E U M E N E S.

No.—In an Hour so black, so dire, as This,
I task but my own Heart, and *Heaven*, to aid me.

If I *must* fall, I *will*.—I go—to try
What *God* forsakes the Friendless.

[*Going out, meets Merope.*]

SCENE IV.

MEROPE and ISMENE.

MEROPE.

Stay, my Son—

Th' Usurper sends me to thee.—Rest, unheard,
His Errand : but my own requires thy Ear.
It has, perhaps, been told thee, that the *Woman*
Conquers the *Queen*.

—Let no light *Credit* of a Guilt so shameful
Insult the Daughter, Mother, Wife,—ah, me !
And *Widow*—of a King.—Yet, I *must* go :
Must, at the Altar, lend my trembling *Hand* ;
And *seem*—oh, Heaven !—

EUMENES.

O, Madam !—so, to seem,
Were so to *be*. Can solemn Vows, at Altars,
Leave Room for Art's Evasions ? See *me*, sooner,
Tingeing the spotted Stone with gushing Blood :
And my torn *Breast* th'unseeming Sacrifice.

MEROPE.

So look'd, so spoke—so, sometimes, frown'd, *Cresphontes*.
Full of thy godlike Father, copy too,
The *Confidence*, he lent me. *He* had scorn'd
To doubt me, for a Moment, *less than Merope*.

EUMENES.

If I was guilty,—think—

MEROPE.

—No more.—Time presses ;—

Hear my resolving Will : and curb thy own.
Th' Usurper of thy Throne no sooner joins
My Hand's suppos'd Consent, than, at the *Altar*,

He

He *swears*—in all the Pomp of *priestly Witness*,
To free thee from thy Chains—and, from that Hour,
Confirm *Succeſſion*, thine.—

E U M E N E S.

Think, at what *Price* comes Empire, bought ſo *dear* !
Rather than ſee you wed this—

M E R O P E.

Raſh, again ?—

Bound, by an Oath, ſo witneſs'd, by the *Gods*,
And All *Mycene's Priests*—and All her *Peers*—
He dares not *break* it : and Thou liv'ſt, to *reign*.
—For me, who have, thenceforth, no Call for *Life*,
I ſeek thy *Father*, in the Grooms, below.

E U M E N E S.

—No more.

—It ſhall *not be*.—See ! my repugnant Soul
Shrinks from th' abhorr'd Conception. The felt *God*,
The *God*, glows, in me : ſwells, againſt Controul :
And every ſpringy Nerve is active *Fire* !
Come on, Friends ! Father ! Mother !—trult my
Firmneſs.

See, if I bear a Heart, that brooks this Wrong :
That poorly pants, for a baſe Hour of *Life*—
And let a *Woman's* Blood outdare a *King's*. [Going.

M E R O P E.

Oh ! ſtay : return.—Call : ſtop him.

E U R I C L E S.

Sir !

N A R B A S.

Prince !

M E R O P E.

Son !

E U M E N E S, (*Returning*.

Look out : ſee yonder : view my Father's *Tomb*.
Know you his Voice ! Are you a *Queen* ?
Come liſten—

I hear him—Hark !—my King, my Father calls !

M E-

M E R O P E.

Methinks the God

He talk'd of, swells, indeed, his widening Soul,
Lifts him above himself—above Mankind.

E U M E N E S.

Come—let me lead you to the Altar's Foot.

There hear, there, see—*there*, dwells th'Eternal's Eye!

M E R O P E.

Ah! what is thy Design!

E U M E N E S.

To *die*,——to *live*.

Friends!—in this warm Embrace, *divide* my Soul.

[*To Narbas, who presses him tenderly.*

—Weep not, my *Narbas*.

No Blush, for Deeds unworthy your Instructions,
Shall stain Remembrance of the Care, I cost you.

—Stay thou, that this good Lord returning from me,
May find thee, and impart a ripening Hope
Whereon your Council may direct and save.

On to the Work of Fate——it calls me hence——
I hear it, and obey.

[*Ex. Eum. Mer. and Eur.*

N A R B A S.

Away——I wou'd not see *thee* share my Sorrow.

I S M E N E.

Oh! 'twere too *poor* a Wish. Heaven knows, I seek
No *Share*,——I long for *Power*, to bear it, *All*.

N A R B A S.

Thou art too good, for Courts——where *Ruin* preys
On Innocence; and nought but *Guile* is safe.

—What are thy Thoughts, of this lost *Prince's* Virtues?

I S M E N E.

I am unskill'd in Men: and, most, in Kings.

But, sure! if ever Beauty dwelt in Form,
Courage in Gentleness, or Truth in Grandeur,
All those adorn'd Perfections meet, in *Him*.

N A R-

N A R B A S.

Yet, see! how Heaven, that *gave* him all these Claims,
 Forgets 'em, and resigns him.—Let That teach thee,
 When, soon, as soon they will, thy Splendors *fall*,
 Thou lovest nothing, but a Right to *Woes*:

I S M E N E.

Shou'd the Queen,

Best, of her Sex!

Leave this loud Stage of Pain,—and rest in *Death*,
 Oh! teach my willing Feet to find some Gloom,
 Dark, as my Prospects, deep inclos'd, for Safety;
 And silent, as the Brow of midnight Sleep!

N A R B A S.

Yes, we *will* go, my *sweet Ismene*, go,
 Where Sorrow's sharpest Eye shall fail to find us.
 Where we may mix with Men, who ne'er deceiv'd,
 And Women, born to *be*, the Charms they look.
 —There *is* a Place, which my *Eumenes* lov'd,
 Till Youth's fond Hope of Glory dash'd his Peace;
 Where Nature, plainly noble, knows no *Pomp*;
 And Virtue moves no *Envy*: [Shouts.

—Hark! That Cry

Bodes Horror—'tis the Signal of some Fate.

—Listen, again—

[Shouts.

I S M E N E.

Again I hear: and tremble.

Who knows, but, now, the Queen's too direful Deed
 Has ended all her Mis'ries!—

N A R B A S.

No more these Eyes shall find thee, fated King!
Cresphontes, and his Race, are, All, no more.

I S M E N E, *at a Window*.

Hence, from the Temple, to the Palace Gate,
 The scattr'ing Crowd runs, wide, a thousand Ways:
 All busied, without View—All, driven, by Terror!

S C E N E

SCENE IV.

Narbas. Ismene. Euricles, bloody.

N A R B A S.

Breathless and bleeding see! who comes!—O, *Euricles!*

E U R I C L E S.

Scarce had I Strength, wedg'd in by crossing Crowds,
To stem yon breathing Torrent.—Give me Rest.

N A R B A S.

Eumenes?——does he *live?*

E U R I C L E S.

He is——the *Son confes'd*——of *Grecian Gods!*

N A R B A S.

What has he suffer'd?

E U R I C L E S.

Nothing—but, has *done*——
Beyond Example's Boast.—Oh! such a Deed!
So terrible! so just!——so fill'd with Wonders!
That half *Alcides'* Labours, scarce were more.

N A R B A S.

And shall he be a King?

E U R I C L E S.

He is

N A R B A S.

And *Merope?*

Great Mirror of Affliction!—lives *She*, too?
How was it?—say.—My Joys will grow too strong?

E U R I C L E S.

The Altar, strew'd with Flow'rs, was ready dress'd,
The smoking Incense rose, in fragrant Curls,
And *Hymen's* lambent Torches flam'd, serene,
Silence, and Expectation's dreadful *Stillness*,
Doubled the solemn Horror of the Scene!
—There, *Poliphontes* stood: and, at his Side,
Dumb as a destin'd Victim, stood the *Queen*.

Our Prince's summon'd Hand had touch'd the Altar;
 His Eye sought Heaven—as if prepar'd to *swear*.
 The Tyrant smil'd:—when strait, the Priest look'd *pale*;
 The Lights extinguisht—and the Temple's Roof,
 Shook by descending Thunder, seem'd to *bow*!
 The *God!* the *God!* the reverend Starter cry'd,
Forbids these baneful Nuptials.—Yes: I HEAR him,
 The dreadful *Prince* reply'd: and, at that Word,
 Leapt, from the Altar, to the Tyrant's Breast—
 And plung'd the sacred *Axe* of Sacrifice,
 Snatch'd, like a Lightning's Flash! and reach'd his *Life*.
 —He *fell*—and o'er him while with pendant Eye
 Th' indignant Hero hung, with Arm new-rais'd,
 Base, from behind, pale *Erox* pierc'd his Side.
 —Red, in his mingled Blood, and rising Anger,
 He heard the *Crowd's protective Cry*—turn'd short,
 And buried in his Brow the rapid Steel.
 Then, to the Altar's Height sublimely sprung,
 Stood, Monarch, all-confess'd; and *wav'd* the Throng.
 Come, let me guide you to this Work of Heav'n.
 Haste, and partake it—fly—

N A R B A S.

Oh! Happy Day—

[*Exeunt.*]S C E N E *the Temple of* H Y M E N.

Eumenes *discover'd on the Altar with the Axe of Sacrifice
 in his Hand. Merope kneeling, Priests, Attendants
 and Guards.* [Trumpets and Shouts heard.]

M E R O P E.

Now, now, ye Gods, my Pray'rs are heard.

[*A loud Clap of Thunder.*]

E U M E N E S.

Hark! Madam, Heav'n approves! th' attentive Gods
 Hear Hearts, and make Voice needless—Doubt not then
 They are the good Minds Guardians—my Deliverance
 Proves

Proves how they lov'd your Virtue : in your Safety
I feel their Blessing perfect——may I live
In Deeds, not Words, to thank the Good they gave.

M E R O P E.

Deeds, Words, and Thoughts are theirs—
Heav'n claims us all.

E U M E N E S *to the People.*

Hear me, my People, take your King, and with him,
Heav'n's best Gift, your Liberty—Haughtier Monarchs
Place Greatness in Oppression : Let my Throne
Find Safety, but in saving——
Pride is too apt to harden prosp'rous Pow'r,
But he, whose Youth is chasten'd by Distress
Makes Subjects Happy, and himself ador'd.

*Enter Nerbas, Euricles and Ismene. All speaking,
kneeling.*

Hail! and be ever bless'd, O King! O Queen!

M E R O P E.

Rise—and lament no more, ye happy Friends
Of Virtue, and of Heaven!——See! what the Gods
Have done—to shame Suspicion, into Faith!
Oh! never let the Innocent *despair* :

The Hand, that *made*, can *save* : and best knows *when*.
[*To Eumenes.*

——Son of *Alcides*!——for, what Heart, but *His*,
Nourish'd in Misery! by Wants obstructed!
Ere sprung, like thine, at Youth's first *Shoot*, to Glory?
Trode on a Tyrant, and redeem'd a *People*?

E U M E N E S.

'Tis but the low, the last, the lightest Duty
Of a *King's* Hand, to *dare*. 'Tis *His*, to *save*;
To think, to hear, to labour, to discern,
To form, to remedy,——to *be*——but *one* :
Yet, act, and love, and fear, and feel,——for *All*.
——Oh, Madam! I am yours, midst *all* these Claims.
Be Those my Glory's, *This* my Duty's Care,
To add my Royal *Father's* Love, to mine :

And,

And, with a *doubled* Rev'rence, seek your Comfort.
 —*Narbas* ! what Power can Language lend my Love,
 To paint the Joy, *Thy* Sense of Pleasure gives me ?
 Thou Source, and Soul, and Author, of my Virtues :
 Suspend we Thoughts, thus tender.—Let us, now,
 Summon *Mycene's* Chiefs, and calm her People.

[*To* Merope.

Come, Madam ! He who *reigns*, but climbs to Care ;
 Tho' Safe, his Throne, he finds no *Softness*, there.
 Dangers, and Doubts, and Toils, each Moment seize,
 Hang on his Business, and perplex his Ease.
 Bright but by Pomp of Woe, Kings shine in vain ;
 Envy'd for Anguish, and adorn'd for Pain.

F I N I S.



